

俺のペットは聖女さま

My pet is a holy girl

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My Pet is a Holy Maiden

Arc 3

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Epub: [Trollo WN/LN EPUB](#)



Chapter 39: The Other-World Traveler

Morning.

Because of the bright sunlight entering from the window, and the squirming sensation on her abdomen, Calcedonia woke up from sleep.

After her consciousness cleared up, she could see the true identity of the squirming feeling on her belly.

And there was also the warm feeling on her back.

“Erm..... What are you doing?”

Calcedonia asked the person who was hugging her from behind, while trying to turn her head around.

“Nnn, I’m touching Calsey’s belly.”

The person behind her, whom you could even call her life partner, answered with a jolly tone.

“Calsey’s skin is so smooth. I could rub it forever.”

“Iyan~ It tickles.”

Even though she complained, the happiness in her voice was clearly noticeable.

And because he understood that, the boy— Tatsumi didn’t stop touching.

Right now, both of them were completely naked. As they were cuddling with the warm pelt, while completely giving themselves to each other.

Ever since the incident with the [Magic Painting], the two have been going to sleep completely naked while entrusting themselves to each other like this almost every night.

It’s not like they had loving intercourse every night. Even without it, just by being able to feel each other like this, they were plenty satisfied.

Tatsumi’s nose was touching Calcedonia’s hair who was squirming because of ticklishness, and silently took in her aroma.

“You smell like the old Chiiko... But maybe it’s my imagination...”

Tatsumi quietly said. And Calcedonia closed her eyes in pleasure after putting her palms on Tatsumi’s, who was still touching her abdomen.

“.....Dear, I have a favour but...”

“Favour?”

“Yes, if possible.... When we’re alone together like this, can you call me [Chiiko] like before?”

“Huh? But that’s...”

“I know, that dear wishes to call me [Calcedonia] as you’ve accepted me as a women. I am truly happy. But [Chiiko] is also a name I’ve been given by you... A name by which only you can call me in this whole world. I don’t mind being called [Calcedonia] normally. But only, for times like this when we are one..... I want you to call me [Chiiko].”

Realizing her wish, Tatsumi tightly hugged her soft body.

“I understand. Then only for times like this, I’ll call you [Chiiko].”

“Thank you, dear.”

While feeling the sensation of Tatsumi’s warm body with her back, Calcedonia smiled sweetly.

Even while being totally immersed in that happy air, Calcedonia tried to get up from the bed.

“Dear, today’s the first day you will be going to the bar where monster hunters gather right? It’s about time we got up.”

“Well yes. I’m a bit reluctant to leave this warmth on the bed and get up, but. Yeah Calsey, you get up first.”

“Eh?”

At the same time Tatsumi stopped talking, Calcedonia started to feel a certain sense of unpleasantness. Her eyes opened wide in surprise as she quickly jumped off the bed.

She hurriedly fixed her posture in midair, and landed on the floor by a narrow margin. But that meant exposing her whole naked body under the sunlight to Tatsumi.

After realizing she was completely naked in front of Tatsumi, she raised a cure scream as she covered her breasts with her hand and kneeled down.

And Tatsumi who was now sitting on top of the bed looked at that Calcedonia with pleasure.

“Yeah, a sight for the eyes.”

“Humph! Recently dear has been a big bully!!”

While squatting down, Calcedonia grabbed a pillow from the bed, and threw it at Tatsumi.

But Tatsumi lightly received the soft pillow thrown at him.

After that, both of them started to laugh warmly.

Even with all this, in the end these two were living in bliss.

The two relaxed at home after having their breakfast. When the 4th bell rang, in other words when it was mid-day (In Earth Standards) they left the house together.

The place they were headed to was one of the bars that the monster hunters made base in the town. It was the one Calcedonia used to frequent when she was an apprentice.

The snow was slowly falling as they walked together.

The housewives of the neighbourhood narrowed their eyes with a smile and called out to them in a happy manner, after seeing these two whose intimacy had already become a common sight around the area.

“Oya, if it isn’t Tatsumi and Miss Calsey. Are you going somewhere?”

“You two are always so intimate aren’t you?”

“True, when these two are around even the piled up snow starts to melt.”

Voices filled with warm jesting. And at those, Tatsumi looked away shyly, while Calcedonia smiled happily.

The two reached the main road, and headed towards the center of the city.

And after that being guided by Calcedonia, they entered an avenue a block away from the main road and walked towards the said bar and concurrently, inn.

“.....So, you said you’ve also been in this bar’s care before. What kind of person is the master?”

“What they say is, this person came to the continent of Zoysalight about 20 years ago from a far away country! After wandering around the continent for a long long time, the master came to Levantes about 5, 6 years ago, and is currently working as the bar master.”

After hearing what Calcedonia said, Tatsumi imagined a stern middle aged man, the ones you usually see in some hero chronicles.

After travelling around the world working as a monster hunter for years, he had to retire because of a wound or some other reason. Right now he works as a barmaster while guiding the junior generation.

Yeah, it’s as per the usual setting. While Tatsumi nodded a few times in his heart, beside him Calcedonia continued her story.

“Recently because of the place’s high fame, all the skilled monster hunters gather at this bar. When I was here, the reputation wasn’t much because the place was newly opened but, nowadays it has firmly taken the spot of representing Levantes as the monster hunter gathering spot.”

Calcedonia as she spoke, had a strong nostalgia mixed in her voice. Seems like she missed the barmaster quite a bit.

“..... I haven’t been able to show my face around the bar ever since I became an Exorcist but... I wonder if the mistress is okay.”

Oh, so it seems the barmaster has a wife.

A stubborn and stern barmaster, and a gentle, bright wife to support him. Yes, quite the common setting, amongst other things.

As Tatsumi was imagining such a scene, Calcedonia's excited voice rang out.

"Ah!! There!! That's where we're heading, [The Elf's resthouse]!!"

As he looked, there certainly was a bar at the direction Calcedonia pointed.

It was an establishment with a door larger than a normal house's. It had the marks of aging, but it had this nice wooden feeling as it seemed to have been properly maintained.

It was a completely tea red brick made building. It had 3 floors. Probably the ground floor was the bar, while the other 2 acted as the inn.

But what caught Tatsumi's eyes the most was the signboard hanging by the door.

There was a knife, a fork and a beer-mug drawn on it, to claim the place as a bar. Beneath it was drawn a bed, probably to tell the guest it was also a inn.

Recently, Tatsumi was finally able to read the texts of this world, somewhat. But either way, the literacy rate of this world was very low.

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That's why, putting on paintings like this rather than writing it on the signboard, was a good decision.

But what caught his eyes was not the paintings.

Because what caught his eye was the words written on the signboard.

It was written not in the words of this country, with brilliant lettering. But these letters were far more familiar to Tatsumi rather than the letters of this country.

And these letters, should not exist in this country.

"W-Why....Why, is this written in Japanese.....?"

Tatsumi looked at the signboard with shock.

[The Elf's resthouse], no matter how you looked at it these were written in hiragana, katakana and kanji! In other words, Japanese!

Calcedonia tilted her head in confusion seeing Tatsumi looking at the signboard in shock.

“Dear? Is something the matter?”

“A-Ah.....H-Hey, Calsey. The words written on this...”

“Oh these? I was told these are words from the mistress’s home country.”

Calcedonia explained after Tatsumi pointed at the words.

It seems like even though Calcedonia can speak Japanese, she can’t read it.

But thinking about it, when Calcedonia was a Cockatiel in the previous world even though she could somewhat understand Japanese from Tatsumi and his family’s everyday conversation, there’s no way she could learn to read and write it.

“Then that means.... No way... The mistress of this bar, is a Japanese like me.....?”

To think that, there was another Japanese besides himself in this country..... No, in this world!

The feeling that started to grow deep inside his heart, could be called a deep nostalgia.

Even though he told himself he no longer wished for a life in Japan, no matter what he started to miss it there time to time.

If, by chance, the mistress here really was a Japanese, then he could finally share this nostalgia with someone.

While high with expectations, Tatsumi, and Calcedonia entered the bar.

The moment he entered the bar, the smell of beer and various kinds of dishes assailed his nostrils.

Just as he guessed before, the ground floor was the bar. Inside, he saw the counter, and a good number of tables meant for 4 and chairs in place.

There were a bunch of people in armour who seemed to be monster hunters sitting on the chairs, as they stared at Tatsumi and Calcedonia in a crude

manner.

Among them were also gazes filled with obvious lust aimed at Calcedonia, and as if to shield her from in Tatsumi stood in front of her.

Right now, Calcedonia and Tatsumi were wearing thick fur overcoats.

While Calcedonia was wearing her usual clothes underneath, Tatsumi was wearing a hardened leather armour and had an iron sword attached to his waist.

Even if he was wearing an overcoat because it was fastened the said monster hunters could clearly guess what was there.

Furthermore, the current Tatsumi had been completely trained as a Clerical knight. Just by his movements it could be guessed that he wasn't a simple novice.

That's why, they just glared at the two with crude gazes, and didn't come forward to say anything. On the contrary it could be said, if Tatsumi put some underlying meaning in their action here, it would be proof of his shallow experience as a monster hunter.

There were also people here who recognized Calcedonia as the [Holy Maiden of the temple of Savaiv] as they started to whisper to each other in low voices.

But even among these probing gazes from the monster hunters, Calcedonia treated it all as wind as she walked towards the counter.

Following Calcedonia, Tatsumi entered as he saw a single woman frantically working in the bar.

Probably, she was the mistress Calcedonia was talking about. Was she the person from Japan?

That's what Tatsumi was hoping for. But on the next instant his eyes turned round in surprise.

"Eh?"

Involuntarily releasing a voice filled with shock, Tatsumi stared at the lady.

Her height was a bit shorter than Tatsumi, probably around 160 cm. She had a

slim body, and her skin was white enough to compare with Calcedonia.

Her light blonde hair had a bit more deeper hue compared to Calcedonia's silver hair. And as if to oppose her ruby red pupils, the lady's were blue like a Sapphire.

And most of all, her pointy long ears which gave rise to a certain feeling. Yes, it was the characteristic of that famous tribe from fantasy world.

"E-Elf...?"

Yes.

She was an Elf.

Till now, Tatsumi didn't have the chance to meet with a demi-human.

This town and the temple of Savaiv only had humans, as the demi-humans seemed to be the minority.

Even if he saw some in the town from afar, or by a glimpse, this was his first time seeing one from such close proximity.

Maybe she heard Tatsumi's muttering from a moment ago but, the Elven lady turned towards them. And as she did, a hint of surprise, mixed with joy passed through her face.

"Miss Calsey!! You're miss Calsey right!!? Uwah-, it's been so long. Have you been doing well?"

"Yes. And it was me who has not been contacting you. Has mistress been well?"

"Yes, of course!! And don't worry, I've also heard of your exploits... [The <<Holy Maiden>> of the temple of Savaiv], was it?"

The elven lady and Calcedonia were smiling as they got to talk to each other after such a long time.

If seems like this elven lady was the mistress of this bar.

But then, who was it that wrote those words on the signboard? No way! Could it be that this elf new Japanese? That's what Tatsumi was thinking.

And the elven lady who was happily talking with Calcedonia till then, finally

looked at Tatsumi.

And then, her face showed an overwhelming amount of shock, as her eyes opened wide.

As she looked at him with her wide open blue eyes, her quivering voice sounded out.

“Eh.....? A-Are you, by chance.... Someone from Japan...?”

The words the elven lady spoke with her trembling voice, was without a doubt in the language Tatsumi was most familiar with, Japanese.

Chapter 40: Elf's was a sponger

“My name is Erulula Zaphyra Fyrasilula Akatsuka. Because it’s a long name, please call me Eru okay?”

That was the name of the lady elf standing in front of Tatsumi, who was not only the owner and mistress of the bar called [The Elf’s Resthouse], but also someone who once lived in Japan.

“—Then after Miss Eru’s husband died, you came to this world?”

“Yes. After Yasutaka...My husband died of age, I used a sword which contained the power to cross worlds to come here. Including my home world and the world of Earth, this would be my third world.”

Tatsumi and Calcedonia who were sitting in front of the counter of [The Elf’s Rest House] while listening to Eru’s life story.

In the past, Eru had been transported from her home world to Japan with the use of a magic item.

She met people of all different sorts there, she was saved, and in the end, she ended up getting a formal family register for Japan. She even married.

But she could not have a child with her husband. As an elf she possessed a far greater lifespan than her husband, so after he passed on, she once again used the magic item to arrive at this world about 20 years ago.

“But, for mistress to be from dear’s home-world.... I’m really surprised.”

“It’s the same for me. To think that Calsey was a Cockatiel in her past life. And because you thought of Tatsumi so much, you even ended up successfully summoning him..... Normally it’s not a story one could simply believe.”

Tatsumi and Calcedonia, with Eru, were happily talking about their life in ever so nostalgic Japan.

By the way, the since the three of them were speaking in Japanese, the

monster hunters around them couldn't understand even if they were desperate in trying to eavesdrop.

"But a Cockatiel huh. Though I never kept one, I often saw them in pet shops. They were so cute.. ... Now that I remember, that person also really liked animals didn't he?"

Eru looked at the picture frame that was placed on the counter.

In the photo, there were 3 highschoolers besides Eru, 2 male and 1 female. The boy standing next to Eru would probably be her husband.

The gaze Eru was currently casting on the picture was very gentle. It was clear that she was still deeply in love with her deceased husband.

After that, they continued to talk about Japan.

Specially Tatsumi and Eru who couldn't really talk much about Japan until then were simply gushing forth with topics related to it.

"Eh? Miss Eru lived in the Hinobu city of Aichi prefecture? I lived in Seto city..."

"Eehh? Hinobu and Seto city are right by each other!? I, I went to Seto a number of times you know? For the Earthenware Festival, and when it's Autumn I went to the Iwaya temple to see the autumn colors."

"Yeah....But I never really went to Hinobu much. At most that time when I went there on the middle school excursion to the Aichi farms."

"Maybe I might have even met Tatsumi somewhere before."

While Eru and Tatsumi were happily chatting, Calcedonia, on the other hand, was somewhat sulking as she rested her chin on top of the counter.

It seems like she didn't like the fact that Eru and Tatsumi were having fun chatting all by themselves.

Though she knew a bit about Japan, as she was a Cockatiel back then, her knowledge was severely limited so she could not keep up with their conversation.

While talking with Eru, Tatsumi noticed Calcedonia's condition. Thus he gently

patted her head.

And with just that, her face bloomed into a gentle, happy smile.

As her mood got better, Calcedonia leaned her head on his shoulder just like that.

And seeing them like that, this time it was Eru's turn to be flabbergasted.

"..... I'm amazed. For that Calsey to fawn over a man this much....."

Before, when Calcedonia still frequented this place, she kept her contact with men to a minimum.

As a monster hunter, there were times when she teamed up with other hunters. But even then, by no means was she ever close to another person like now.

A happy face that even Eru had never seen till now. And the person her smile was meant for was smiling happily too.

They weren't talking but, in the first place, they did not need words to convey their feelings.

Eru as well, sensing the inseparable bond that existed between the two, smiled happily.

"Now then, once again welcome to the [Elf's Resthouse]."

After she happily finished her talk with Tatsumi, she revised her attitude.

From now, it wouldn't do to just talk about their past, they also had to talk about the future.

Maybe because of that, she changed her language from Japanese to the common trade language of the Zoysalight continent.

"This bar and inn is mainly used as a gathering place for the Monster Hunters. I, Erulula Zaphyra Fyrasilula Akatsuka, am the owner. Of course, other than me there are also some employees working here. Even though I am here most of the time, the employees work in shifts."

The people gathered here weren't all monster hunters. There were also

information brokers, and people wishing to post a monster subjugation request.

Of course, there were people who came here simply for a meal, and there were people who wanted to rent a place for the night.

“Unlike games and light novels, the monster hunters of this world don’t have a supporting organization like a [Guild]. So of course, there are no dividing ranks either. From the moment one thinks ‘I am a monster hunter’, he becomes a monster hunter. But, well, whether or not he actually has the skills to take down a monster is a different matter altogether.”

For the most part, the faster ones take the requests posted in the bar room.

But whether or not the request is something he is able to do, is something the consignee has to decide for himself.

Though one might receive advice from friends and seniors, in the end, it’s self-responsibility.

“For me, I can’t leave requests to people who cannot possibly subjugate the said monster. If all we got were failures, then it would end up as a matter affecting the store’s reputation. However, there are always people who get lured by the rewards, not even looking back to evaluate whether they really can finish it considering their own abilities. For people like them, there are cases of severe injuries. In the worst case, they die.”

That’s why, Tatsumi should think it through carefully before accepting a request — That’s what Eru was implying.

“I understand. I am not in a hurry so I’ll steadily start with simple requests.”

“Yes, it’s important that you think like that.”

By the way, Eru meaningfully smiled with that as a preface:

“As the owner of this place, I have the duty to evaluate just how strong Tatsumi is. So, I want to prepare a small test, how about it?”

As someone who acts as a middleman for Monster hunters, she had the duty to understand how skillful each of them was.

The ‘test’ Eru was talking about was without a doubt something to grasp if Tatsumi had the minimum requirement as a monster hunter.

That's why Tatsumi agreed to take the test without any hesitation.

"So then, what's the test going to be about?"

"Ufufufu. When talking about tests like these for newcomers, of course it's gotta be [Herb Collection] quests."

"I see, basically collecting a certain amount of a certain type of herb right?"

"Yes. But rather than a certain amount, a single stock will do. Please go and collect the herb I am about to tell you and bring it here. This will be Tatsumi's trial."

The herb Eru told him to bring was called Grendan. In these lands, it has been long used as salves and ointments.

"This is a trial only for Tatsumi, so Miss Calsey, you can't go alright?"

"Yes, understood."

Though she obediently replied with that, her expression showed her dissatisfaction. It seems like she wasn't willing to part with Tatsumi, even if it was just for a small time. Though in this case, she could not be stubborn.

"But, I've never seen a Grendan herb..."

"It looks like this. Tsuil, can you?"

As she lightly addressed the ring she wore on the middle finger of her right hand, a small humanoid figure appeared.

From what Tatsumi could see it was about 15cm tall. It looked to be like a human but had 2 sheets of dragonfly-like wings on its back.

It was wearing green clothing, with a three-cornered hat of the same color on the head. Most of all, its big nose in the center of its face was eye catching.

The little figure smiled at Eru and soon vanished, in its place a vivid stalk of herb was floating in front of Eru's palm.

"This is the Grendan Herb, please remember it carefully."

The herb was floating on top of Eru's palm like a real projection. Suddenly

seeing that Tatsumi blanked out for a moment.

“T-This... Is this magic?”

“Yes. Using the power of the spirit of illusions, it created a phantom image.”

“Eh!? T-Then, this is the so-called Spirit Magic?”

Spirit Magic.

Unlike the Aria Magic Calcedonia used, it was a completely different type.

Though he didn't know much about Spirit magic, he remembered that when he was first summoned here Giuseppe had spoken to him about it.

And Giuseppe said that there was a single lady who was spreading this magic around.

“Could it be, that the person propagating this magic is... Miss Eru?”

As Tatsumi said that, Eru showed a shy smile.

“Ehehehe, tentatively, that would be it.”

She came to this world about 20 years ago.

At that time, seeing her using a magic completely different from the type used in this world, many were excited to be her apprentice.

But of course, not everyone who came under her wing could use spirit magic.

To be able to use spirit magic, other than the constitution of the mage himself, there was the important factor of being able to communicate with spirits.

For that reason, even within the small number of people in the world who could use mana at all, the number of people who could use spirit magic was even smaller.

She and the small number of her disciples, who had abilities far above normal mages, started to receive the attention of the world about 10 years ago. So actually, spirit magic had been propagating only since 10 years ago.

“I've really received one shock after another today. Not only is the mistress someone from dear's country, but even the founder of spirit magic.”

It seems like Calcedonia was not aware that Eru was the originator of Spirit Magic.

Though the number of times Calcedonia frequented this place wasn't that few, she had never seen Eru use spirit magic.

"Well than Tatsumi, have you remembered the features of the Grendan herb?"

The phantom image of the herb was still floating on top of her hand.

Tatsumi looked at the image as if he wanted to copy it in his brain: its color, special traits, everything.

But even though he's seeing the herb, he had no confidence of actually recognizing it in the fields.

That's where Tatsumi took the help of the convenience of modern civilization.

Tatsumi took out a certain something from the sack hanging on his waist. It was something he had when he was summoned here, a cell phone.

The cell phone he had was an old type of patterned design one. But its power capacity was excellent as it was still working splendidly.

Of course, he couldn't perform the original purpose of the cell phone but he could utilize the digital camera built in.

Tatsumi started up the camera and took the picture of the image. With this, he could have a better reference.

And seeing Tatsumi using the cell phone, Eru had a surprised reaction.

"Oooh, that's a rather antique model. Isn't that a model from the early 2000s? Even when I first started living in Japan, only a small percentage of people used these types."

"Well certainly, but I was in Japan in the mid-2010s so... even if it was a bit older, it was still being used a lot. It couldn't really be called an antique you know?"

"Eh? In the mid-2010s?"

Eru stared blankly. And Tatsumi finally noticed there was something wrong in

the conversation.

“Erm... until when did Miss Eru stay in Japan?”

“I was in Japan till 2080 but.....”

Eru went to Japan in the 2010 period. That’s when she met her husband who was still 10 years old. That’s why she lived in Japan for 70 more years till her husband’s lifespan was naturally over.

“... .. I see. There seems to be a time gap between the period you and I lived in Japan.”

“That seems to be the case. I might have even crossed time when I came here. In the first place, there is no proof that time flows the same in both worlds, and there is no way to ascertain that. Maybe the world I lived in and the world Tatsumi lived in were just [Two very similar but different Japans].”

Tatsumi nodded at Eru’s words.

Just like she said, there was no guarantee that all worlds had similar time flows. Maybe the rate time changed in each world was different.

“But I think that my meeting here with Tatsumi is the most important thing of all.”

With that, Eru sweetly smiled.

“Well then, about the trial. How about we start right now?”

With an expression like that of a kid who thought up a new prank, Eru looked at Tatsumi.

“That’s right, I’d like to wrap this up quickly too.”

After Tatsumi agreed to Eru’s proposal, he stood up from the counter then looked at Calcedonia.

But what he didn’t notice was Eru showing an expression of shock after he turned around.

“Well then, for now I’ll return home and prepare a bit. What’s Calsey going to do in the meantime?”

“I’ll just stay here and wait for you to come back.”

Her voice was as calm as usual. There was no uneasiness hidden within.

Seems like she didn’t doubt that Tatsumi would succeed the trial.

“By the way miss Eru, is it okay for me to ask where this Grendan herb grows?”

“G-Grendan herb, right, exit from the south gate of the town and go a bit down south. The herb grows at the entrance of the forest there but... are you seriously going to take the test now?”

Being asked by Tatsumi, Eru subconsciously obediently replied with that.

After that, as he already had learned where the herb grew, Tatsumi said with a smile “I’ll be back,” and just like that, exited [The Elf’s Resthouse].

Eru reflexively wished Tatsumi farewell but, it was then that she finally came to her senses.

“Calsey!! Is it really okay for Tatsumi to take the test just like this?!”

Eru impatiently asked.

But Calcedonia, without being perturbed, rather, she replied with confidence.

“It’s okay. My husband, he will be back with the herb right away.”

But one of the Monster Hunters who happened to listen to the conversation of the girls approached them with a concerned look on his face.

“Oi oi Miss <<Holy Maiden>>. That brother who just left, if he goes out now to look for the Grendan herb, he might not come back alive if he does things unskillfully you know?”

Chapter 41: Actually Dangerous Herb Search

“Isn’t mistress being a bully here? Telling a newbie to go herb searching, in this season of all times?”

“I-I say, I completely thought Calsey would stop him here... But for her to send him away with a smile...”

Eru was in a slight panic, as she switched her gaze between Calsey, the monster hunter, and the entrance.

“W-We have to hurry up and chase him! If we don’t stop Tatsumi...”

Eru who came out of the counter with a commotion wanted to dash out of the bar just like that.

But Calcedonia who was sitting on the counter stopped her.

“No need to worry. My husband, he’ll bring back the Grendan Herb within a single bell.”

The [Single bell] Calcedonia talked about was the interval between two rings of the bells the temple sounded to announce the time. Back on Earth, it’s the equivalent of 2 hours.

“Hey Miss <<Holy Maiden>>, no matter what, ain’t this a bit too reckless?”

The monster hunter shrugged his shoulders helplessly.

“Because this town’s quite big, it will take some time to reach the south gate from here if he’s walking. And from the south gate to the forest, in this season if he’s going by foot then it’ll at least take a bell of time you know? Certainly, there is only a plain from the gate to the forest without much obstacles, but that only counts in seasons without snow. In this season, you gotta be careful as you walk so you don’t trip.”

A season without snow and a season where the snow is piled up. Just which one would make a trip longer goes without saying.

“Besides, while the Grendan herb grows all season, it’s a pain searching for it

in this season. But there's snow piled up all over the place."

He had to advance through the plains while pushing through the snowfields and had to dig up snow to search for the herb.

Though it was only one stalk, finding that one stalk was by no means an easy task. It's a heavy labor that exhausted one's stamina and willpower.

"And by the way, it's already the 5th bell now right? There's only about 2 bells remaining till the sun goes down. If someone camps outside in this season, it might even end up with that person dying... Calsey, does Tatsumi have any experience camping out in this season.

The 5th bell Eru mentioned was 2 P.M. on Earth— after 2 more bells, or at 6 P.M., the sun would go down.

It takes about 4 hours for a round trip, so if he returned before dusk then he had almost no time left over to search for the herb.

"If it's for seasons without snow he has received training for camping outside from the temple but, he doesn't have any experience for seasons with snow."

As a part of his training, Tatsumi had experience of camping outside but just as she said, it was when there was no snow.

Tatsumi had no experience of camping a night out in seasons like this when the cold was severe.

And like Eru said, if one was careless camping outside in this season, he or she could potentially freeze to death.

Hearing what Calcedonia said, Eru and the monster hunter became even more nervous.

But, Calcedonia was exceedingly calm as she didn't even show a hint of impatience.

"Hey, Miss <<Holy Maiden>>. Is this really okay? At this rate, that laddie might not ever return? Ain't he your lover?"

"That's right Calsey, at this rate Tatsumi might end up as Lint said and..."

The monster hunter called Lint was worried like it was his own problem.

Seems like he had a character which is used to looking out for others.

Calcedonia observed the monster hunter called Lint anew.

He looked to be in his mid-30s or early 40s. There was a kind of dignity overflowing from his being, he should be a really skillful hunter.

Actually, all the equipment he had was from Monster materials. If he wasn't skilled enough, then he could not have hunted some of them.

He, who was worrying about Tatsumi as if it was his own business, made a really good impression on Calcedonia.

"It's alright. My husband will be back soon. Of course, with the target herb in hand."

That's why Calcedonia replied to Lint with a smile on her face.

After that, there was a bizarre atmosphere hanging around the [Elven Resthouse].

Eru and Lint who could not calm down kept of fidgeting in anxiousness as they turned their eyes toward the entrance a number of times. There were a few times other visitors came in through the door, and every time that happened their gaze full of expectation quickly turned into dejection.

The other monster hunters had their own thoughts on this.

Just like how there were guys who were completely indifferent about Tatsumi's matter, there were also people who were like Lint and kept looking at the door.

Among them, there were also people who were betting whether or not he would come back alive, so the overall atmosphere was a bit chaotic.

Within all that, only Calcedonia was perfectly relaxed as she drank the tea brewed by Eru.

And then.

And then, just as Calcedonia said, when 1 bell of time finally passed,

"I'm ba-..... huh?"

Tatsumi returned to the [Elven Rest House] with a somewhat carefree

attitude.

All the Monster hunters present in the bar looked at Tatsumi in astonishment simultaneously.

While being perplexed by the abnormal air of the bar, Tatsumi approached the counter where Eru and Calcedonia were waiting.

“Yes, Miss Eru. It’s this right?”

Saying that, what Tatsumi took out was a vibrant herb with some dirt hanging on the roots, and snow on the body.

It was the Grendan herb, this test’s target.

“.....T-That’s certainly a Grendan but... H-How did you do it so quickly...?”

“That’s... a secret I’m afraid.”

Tatsumi suddenly said with a blink.

Though there wasn’t really a reason to hide it, he shouldn’t indiscreetly boast about his powers. Judging that, Tatsumi dodged Eru’s question.

Lint, on the other hand, was seriously looking at the Herb brought by Tatsumi.

“...Yup.... This doesn’t look like a piece he’d bring after buying it somewhere. Judging by the snow and dirt, he didn’t pick this too long ago... Hey lad, where did you pick this herb from?”

“Of course, from the south forest Miss Eru told me about, but?”

“No, certainly the only place around here with Grendan herbs would be around the south forest but... Just how did you go and come back in such a short amount of.... Lad, are you by chance a mage?”

“Yes, I am a mage.”

While he replied to Lint with a smile he secretly thought ‘A mana user to be precise.’

Lint crossed his arms with a growl and kept staring at the Grendan herb Tatsumi brought back.

The other monster hunters were looking at his silhouette with varied

expressions.

People who admired him because he could bring it back in such a short time, people who doubted him thinking he cheated, and people who were sad because they lost the bet.

Among them, the only person who had no doubt at all about Tatsumi's achievement, Calcedonia, approached him with a smile.

"Dear, good work. And welcome back."

"Yup, I'm back, Calsey."

They just smiled as they looked at each other. For these two, they didn't need words to communicate.

Eru and Lint were looking at them with marvel.

The other monster hunters at the bar also sent flying jeers one after another.

But as long as Calcedonia had Tatsumi all the jeers would turn into blessings, and Tatsumi too had long grown accustomed to these kinds of reactions.

Tatsumi then looked at Eru and asked her about the test.

"So, did I pass the test?"

"Yes! I, Erulula Zaphyra Fyrasilula Akatsuka as the mistress of the [Elven Rest House] gladly approve of Tatsumi as a monster hunter, though a novice."

As Eru declared, everyone started to cheer.

"Work hard from now, rookie!"

"Don't get too optimistic and do something stupid you hear me?"

"If ya get hurt then you'll make the pretty lady sad."

"Don't get too over familiar with mistress bastard!!"

There were many monster hunters and each of them showed different reactions.

Though a few of them were completely indifferent about him, most of them comfortably accepted the rookie.

And so.

Tatsumi finally was publicly acknowledged as a monster hunter who would frequent the [Elven Resthouse] from now on.

Surrounding Tatsumi and Calcedonia like a ring, the monster hunters were interrogating them on how exactly he could've brought back a Grendan herb so quickly.

"About that, I used a bit of magic."

"This times herb searching was really compatible with my husband's magic."

Tatsumi and Calcedonia answered the monster hunters' questions with that.

While Eru and Lint wanted to know more of the details about the magic, as long as they weren't willing to talk Eru and Lint would probably not press them.

Actually, the test this time was really compatible with Tatsumi's magic affinity.

The most troubling obstacle of the test was definitely the large amount of snow piled up on the plains.

The snow obstructed movement and hid the tracks of the herb.

But this wasn't really much of an obstruction in front of Tatsumi's magic.

By using <<Instant Transition>> he could remove the hindrance of snow.

If he used the roofs to go out of the town, then there really would not be much to obstruct his view, as he could then easily use <<Instant Transition>>.

Well, of course, his <<Instant Transition>> also had a few limitations.

Although it could be said Tatsumi had an unlimited supply of mana, the amount he could actually store in his body at a time was limited.

That amount was even smaller than Calcedonia, just a bit more than the average mage.

In the past, when he first used <<Instant Transition>> he used an amount far greater than Calcedonia's, but that was when he was in a subconscious or berserk state and normally, he was unable to do that.

Because the farther he teleported, the larger the amount of mana needed increased, so no matter what the distance of one teleport was limited.

Of course, even if he used up all the mana with 1 teleport, the next second it would all be but replenished from the surrounding so, yes, it was true he could only cross a limited distant with one teleport. But all he had to do is repeat that.

Tatsumi easily reached the forest with repeated transfers, so after that, he rested a bit to recover his stamina. Then he started to search for the herb.

This is where his <<Instant Transition>> ability really shined.

Tatsumi used the scabbard of his sword to draw a suitably large circle in the snow. Then he transferred it all away.

By doing this he had no need to go out of his way to dig up all the snow.

By the way, the reason he drew the circle was because doing this helped him solidify the image he had to transfer the snow.

Repeating this a few times, he found the target herb.

And after he found the herb there was no need to hurry.

Tatsumi examined the surroundings of the forest. He memorized exactly where which type of herbs grew, as it might come in handy in the future.

The suburbs and forest surrounding the royal capital had no fierce monsters, so Tatsumi circled around the place with a nonchalant attitude and finally after his stamina was fully recovered, he returned the same way he got there.

“Ah, That’s right!! Hey! Tatsumi, if it’s okay want to exchange phone numbers and address?”

As Tatsumi and Calcedonia were happily speaking with the monster hunters, Eru suddenly spoke out.

“No well, I don’t mind exchanging but, we can’t use cellphones in this world right?”

“Isn’t it okay? Come on, it’s all about the meaning, the meaning! Uwah! Exchanging numbers and addresses, so nostalgic!”

Tatsumi smiled bitterly seeing the delightful Eru.

Certainly, as Eru said, she did not have the chance to exchange contacts with someone in this world.

Though they won't be able to communicate normally with their phones, there's no harm in exchanging their contacts.

"I guess that's right, even if it's just the ambiance."

As Tatsumi once again brought out his phone, Eru also took out a thin palm sized and transparent board from her pockets.

"Perhaps... this is a phone from the 2080s?"

"Yes, other than this there were also the laying-types which were implemented directly into the brain but, my husband disliked those so I also only used these types."

"I see, as expected of the future. But, how do you charge this?"

"Ufufu, actually, I brought a lot of things when I came here."

As Eru said smugly, Tatsumi looked at the direction she pointed at. There, he saw a small palm sized machine put in a nice spot.

Of course, it was Tatsumi's first time seeing such a machine but, he could somewhat guess what use it had.

"Is that by chance... a mini solar power generator?"

"Bingo. But it can't really output that much electricity. At most, I use it to power some small electrical appliances in my room.

It seems like Eru had made ample preparations before coming to this side.

If by chance, Tatsumi also had some time to prepare before crossing over, then what would be the things he would bring, he wondered.

But as soon as he thought of that, he pushed the idea towards the back of his mind.

It was too late to think about changing the past. And besides, Tatsumi found a wonderful treasure in this world, greater than any handy device he could bring, or any delicious food he could eat.

After exchanging contacts with Eru, he looked towards the wonderful treasure— towards the silver haired girl sitting by him.

"Is something the matter, dear?"

“It’s nothing. I’m just happy because I have you by my side”

At Tatsumi’s sudden words, Calcedonia happily blushed.

Chapter 42: His Lover is a Goblin!

After hearing what he said, both Calcedonia and Tatsumi's face went totally blank.

"W-Wha, Verse...Y-You, now, just what did you.....?"

Somehow, he was only able to utter that much. After he looked at Calcedonia with a sidelong glance, she was still dumbfounded.

That was how shocking Verse's earlier statements were.

"As I say, ya know? I should probably get married soon too."

They didn't hear wrong!

Surely, he said the same thing just a while ago.

The location was the usual temple garden. And as usual, Tatsumi, Verse and Calcedonia were having lunch there. But at his sudden marriage declaration they were at a loss of words.

"E-Erm...You... Did you... have a lover...?"

It was a somewhat rude question to ask in any kind of situation but, the Tatsumi right now did not have the composure to mind that.

And Verse too didn't act like he minded it much as he continued to talk,

"Huh? I didn't tell you before? She's my childhood friend ya see. When I left my village for the capital, she also came with me. While I was barely getting by working as a Junior priest here, she's been working at a certain bar in Levantes as a waitress."

There wasn't anything like sweet fondness in his words. Just simple indifference, as if he was stating a fact.

But what was present was his happiness. Tatsumi, hearing Verse's way of speaking, completely understood just how much he cared about that childhood friend.

"I became a senior priest like you. And also an official Clerical Knight. I was thinking, it would be okay to start a family now."

'So I need a favour' He continued to speak as he looked at Calcedonia.

"If possible, could you act as the witness for our marriage?"

"M-Me...?"

"Yes. I know, that for a simple priest like me to ask the [Holy Maiden of the

temple of Savaiv] to act as our marriage witness is absurd but she, my childhood friend is one of your most devout believers. Recently, she even said that ,’ Her holiness coincidentally came to the bar, and I got to see her up close!’ happily. Asking the <<Holy Maiden>> to be the witness of our marriage has always been her dream.”

Verse suddenly stood up, and with that momentum he bowed down his head.

“I beg you!! Please help me fulfill her... Nanau’s dream!!”

Calcedonia subconsciously looked at Tatsumi who was beside her. Tatsumi was also looking at her.

Smiling, the two nodded simultaneously.

“Understood. If you are okay with me, I’ll be your witness.”

“R-Really?!”

“Of course. But... Is it okay to first meet with Verse’s partner... Miss Nanu?”

But at that moment, Tatsumi certainly noticed it.

That within Calcadonia’s ruby red were burning sparks of curiosity.

As expected, she too was a maiden of that age. Being interested in other’s love affairs is a must.

But when they heard about who his lover was, both Calcedonia and Tatsumi put on troubled expressions.

“Eh.....?”

Unintentionally, Tatsumi gasped like a dunce.

That was how much shocking Verse’s next words were.

“My Childhood friend.... Nanau is... She’s actually... T-That... A Goblin.”

Verse said somewhat with a shy expression. But Tatsumi couldn’t help and think of a completely different matter.

Goblin.

No doubt, that’s what Verse had said.

Even Tatsumi knew what a Goblin was.

A creature that appears in almost all fantasy genre games and novels. The

most standard enemy available. And in most cases they are the weakest of the small fries.

Their skin colour varied from green, grey and even brown. They had goggling big eyes, and a body the size of a child. In most cases they are represented as monsters. Without a doubt the ugliest of them to boot. And they had nasty characters that flatter the strong and bully the weak.

They noisily come in groups and get noisily get beaten in groups, the King of Small fries.

That was what Tatsumi knew about Goblins.

And Verse certainly said, that his lover was a Goblin.

“E-Erm...”

Just how should he ask him, Tatsumi pondered. And he pondered with all his might.

‘Everyone’s preference is different’. Should he say that, or should he come clean here and say, ‘That’s a peculiar preference you’ve got there.’ to his face?

Tatsumi who was confused looked to Calcedonia for assistance.

As he did that, he saw she too was looking at him with a troubled face.

“E-Excuse me... Mister Verse? I-Is miss Nanau.... Really a Goblin...?”

“Yup, that’s right. Close to the rural village I live in there’s a community of goblins who also made a village. Ever since way before our village had ties with them. I met her when I was a kid and before I even knew it we ended up like this.”

Verse must’ve realized that Calcedonia was troubled.

As he once again sat down on the chair, he smiled as if wanted to smooth things over.

“But well, even I know that marriage with another species isn’t really taken well by the people. Still, I... I want to be with Nanau.”

“Is that so... I understand. If you two really do love each other, that Lord Savaiv would surely bless you with his divine protection.”

While tightly holding her holy crest, Calcedonia uttered the words of prayer given to the god Savaiv.

Later Tatsumi found out from Calcedonia that this country wasn’t really that accepting of other races. The reason why she had a troubled face, was that.

Because of the racial difference, they would probably have different lifespan. With it their lifestyle would also be different. And they might also not be able to have any children, problems like these were common.

Specially for royalty and aristocrats, it was a complete taboo. Even if they had demi-human mistresses, she could absolutely never be the main wife.

But still, though rare there have been cases of people from different races marrying within commoners.

Of course in most cases they weren't accepted by the society but, even so they would probably still strongly love each other.

"I see. Then, I'll also root for Verse and Miss Nanau!"

Tatsumi said as if he wanted to convince himself.

But, out of all things, to actually want to marry a Goblin, Tatsumi inwardly sent of Verse with the title of a <<Hero>>.

When they reached that place, Tatsumi and Calcedonia both looked as if they were smacked in the head.

Without delay, Verse took Tatsumi and Calcedonia to meet the goblin named Nanau.

Tatsumi who was curious about the existence of this Goblin, and Calcedonia

who was giddy to meet Verse's lover, headed towards the center of the capital with Verse.

But after they reached the Bar where Nanau worked in, both Tatsumi and Calcedonia were flabbergasted as they looked at the signboard.

"Ehh... So the bar where that Miss Nanau worked was this place... Wait, are you sure?"

Looking at the signboard, Tatsumi asked Verse for confirmation.

"Yeah, I'm sure. Why? Didn't I mention it before?"

The signboard Calcedonia and Tatsumi were looking at, without doubt, the words written there spelled [Elven Resthouse].

Opening the doors like he was used to it, Verse entered with Tatsumi and Calcedonia following behind.

Recently, Tatsumi had completely gotten used to the feel of this bar. Though he's not gone up to the inns in the 2nd and 3rd floor as of yet, he's been coming here along with Calcedonia quite a lot lately.

Eru who was behind the counter smiled after seeing Tatsumi and the lot.

"Tatsumi, Calcedonia, welcome. I see even Verse's with you today."

Seems like she already knew Verse was acquainted with Tatsumi and Calcedonia. Maybe, the Goblin Nanau who worked here was the one who told Eru about it.

But this gave rise to another question in his mind.

He's been to the [Elven Resthouse] quite a number of times, but he has never seen a goblin.

Maybe it was because Eru was the master here but, there were a few demi-humans working here. But he has no recollection of seeing a Goblin among them.

As he was pondering that with his head tilted, an energetic voice sounded from the corner of the bar.

“Ah, Verse!! Y-You really brought the <<Holy Maiden>> here!?”

[TLN : She uses, 'Verse-kun!!'. So yeah, energetic loli, like Hestia.]

“Yo Nanau! I said so before right, Lady Calcedonia was my mate's wife.”

A short statured humanoid figure energetically jumped into Verse's embrace, and Verse happily hugged her to a stop.

Tatsumi witnessed all of that with a blank expression. And Calcedonia who was beside him was smiling happily.

The reason why she was happy was because Verse introduced her as [His mate's wife].

She was nonchalantly brushing up her hair again and again to show off the engagement earrings which were proof of her relationship with Tatsumi.

But Tatsumi didn't have the composure to look at that Calcedonia as he was staring at the little creature in Verse's embrace.

It's height was about Verse's chest. She had brown toned skin and a shoulder length silver hair.

Her sparkling big eyes were mysterious, golden in colour. And from her forehead there was two small horns poking out.

At first glance she looked like a 13 or 15 year old human kid. The same age as middle school kids from Tatsumi's previous world.

But it was apparent even though she was wearing a waitress's uniform that, she had the proportions of a mature lady.

Different from Calcedonia and Eru, she looked like an energetic beautiful young lady.

Certainly, he saw this lady numerous times in the shop. And from her appearance he guessed that she was some sort of demi-human.

But he could've never guessed that her racial tribe was 'that', the most

standard small fry of the fantasy genre.

“T-This, is this world’s, goblin...?”

Tatsumi muttered in complete shock. Seeing him like that, Eru nodded multiple times and said,

“I understand. I really, really understand what Tatsumi is feeling right now. Me too when I first saw the Goblins of this world, I was shocked. Specially because back in my homeworld goblins are exactly the same as the ones described in Japan.”

Furthermore according to Eru, Nanau was already a fine adult in Goblin standards.

This world’s goblins all had similar outer appearance as Nanau. Among them, some of them had horns, some didn’t. Among those who did some had one horn and some had two. Their individual characteristics varied.

“Speaking of Goblins, they’re a race of beautiful men and women. Because of that, some countries even treat them as mere slaves.”

Calcedonia’s voice contained a hint of sadness. Certainly with men and women this pretty in their race, for people of certain hobbies it was quite covetous.

Tatsumi could easily imagine goblin slaves going around as [High class goods].

Largofiely kingdom also had slaves. But the slaves here were all criminals who committed atrocities, people who fell into debt, people who couldn't even afford a meal to eat so they sold themselves as slave and folks like that. There weren't any who were abducted forcefully to be sold.

Of course, there could be slaves like that who were sold in the dark of the kingdom by slave merchants, and it might even be common in other countries.

Before his eyes was the Goblin girl Nanau who looked happy with Verse.

Tatsumi wished from the bottom of his heart that this sweet girl would never have to face such a cruel fate and that she lived happily, forever with Verse.

Chapter 43: Six Demi Humans

Hearing what Tatsumi said, Verse and Nanau who was sitting beside him on her break were both surprised.

“Eh? There aren’t any demi-humans in Tatsumi’s hometown? None at all?”

“T-That means, there aren’t any Elves, Dwarves, Goblins and Cait Sith, right? Uwa, unbelievable...”

Verse and Nanau looked at each other with faces full of surprise.

“Though I’m not that knowledgeable about his homeland, certainly there weren’t any demi-humans.”

Calcedonia’s experience in Japan was extremely limited. The only things she knew of Japan were Tatsumi, his family and the area surrounding his house.

There, Eru who brought in the orders warranted for Tatsumi.

“It might seem unbelievable but it’s true. There are only humans where Tatsumi was born.”

“Ah, now that I think about it, mistress once said she used to live in Tatsumi’s hometown.”

“Yes. Because I already consider Japan, which is Tatsumi’s hometown, as my

hometown too.”

Eru left after she said that. Verse who was looking at her leaving back recalled the things Eru said to him before.

Eru’s late husband was from the same area as Tatsumi. Eru, after being caught in a certain accident was thrown into a foreign place. Her husband, who was only a teen at that time, was the one who picked her up. He was the one who looked after her too.

After that, they got married. But Eru was an Elf with lifespan extending multiple times that of a human. She was unable to have a child with her husband and after he passed on, she left to travel. Several years ago she finally settled down here in the capital and opened a bar.

That was all that Verse knew of Eru’s past.

After Verse moved his gaze from Eru to Tatsumi, he said with a prideful grin,

“Then Tatsumi, you don’t know about the Six Demi-Humans?”

“ ‘Rokuajin’? Y-Yeah, I don’t think I know. Does Calsey know?”

Calcedonia who was sitting beside him nodded gently, and like usual, she smiled.

“Yes. If you please, should I explain?”

“Yup. I’m counting on you.”

Maybe she was happy being relied on by Tatsumi, Calcedonia enthusiastically started her explanation.

Six Demi-Humans.

This was the title of the six demi-human tribes with the closest relation with the 6 major magic systems.

Dwarves, with the deepest connection with <Fire>.

Elves, who were intimate with <Water>.

Cait Sith, sworn friends with the <Wind>.

Goblins, the kin of the <Earth>.

Sprites, the children of <Light>.

Shades, who grew in the <Darkness>.

Of course, other than these there were many more diverse demi-human tribes and clans, but these six were the most famous.

Tatsumi knew about dwarves and elves. But though the dwarves and elves of this continent were similar to the ones Tatsumi knew of in appearance, they

had some differences.

The dwarves Tatsumi knew about were something like Earth spirits but here they had a better affinity with fire.

That's why normal fire and heat were nothing but tickles to them. Using the special traits of the tribe, they could work in higher temperature than other tribes. Especially glass work and pottery, which were their master class crafts.

And about the elves, here they didn't live deep in the forest, but instead underwater. Of course, it wasn't a problem for them to come to the surface.

Tatsumi was greatly surprised when he heard about the elves. Because they live underwater, they didn't have the custom of wearing clothes.

[[TLN : Oh boy.]]

Of course, when they come to the surface they would wear clothes to match with the customs of other tribes.

But vice versa, if one wanted to visit an elven village underwater, it was proper manners to not wear any clothes in that case.

By the way, in the world Eru lived in before, there was also a tribe called <Water Elves>. But of course, they didn't live totally underwater like the ones here.

About Goblins, well Tatsumi just got over his shock over it.

Brown skin, silver hair and golden eyes. It was said that they had these features because of the protection of the continent's spirit of the earth. They had high agricultural and crafting ability. They say there are certain things that are impossible to cultivate unless it was them.

This was also a tribe known for its abundant fertility. Twins and triplets were common. And it wasn't that weird for quintuplets and sextuplets to be born.

Actually, Nanau had an elder sister and brother, 3 younger sisters and 1 younger brother. Her elder brother and elder sister were twins, while she, 1 of her younger sisters and her younger brother were triplets.

Cait Sith, Sprites, and Shades. Well, Tatsumi knew nothing about them.

According to Calcedonia, Cait Sith were like 1-meter tall cats walking on their two feet.

As the tribe of the wind, they had the special ability to walk in the air. Rather than settling down in one place, they loved to travel the world like nomads. Their special ability was believed to be the blessing of the spirits of the wind.

Sprites were a tribe of tiny people ranging from 30 to 40 cm. They had transparent, dragonfly-like wings on their backs, or so they say.

The reason for the uncertainty was because sprites could manipulate light to create illusions, and even turn their own selves transparent. By using this power, they hardly ever show up in front of other tribes.

They are also known for their mischievous nature. They hide their figures, approach the other tribes and play various pranks on them.

But even if they like to prank, they mean no harm. As they have no evil intent, even if someone got played by them they won't really feel malice towards them.

The people of darkness, the shades, have gray colored skin with tall, lean bodies. Both their eyes and hair are pitch black.

But their most eye-catching features were their four eyes and four hands.

Because of the four eyes they have exceptional sight. Not only can they see things much farther away than normal people, they can also see the [Heat] levels of a place, just like a Thermoglass.

They are also known as a tribe of warriors. Considering they have 4 arms, their offensive capabilities are obviously much greater than others.

Like a whirlwind, they use each of their hands to wield a weapon to swiftly mow their foes to pieces.

They have calm personalities with a strong sense of duty. They say that if they give you their word on something, they will never break that promise.

The above were the leading Six Demi-Human tribes of the continent.

After hearing Calcedonia's explanation Tatsumi let out a long breath.

While listening to her explanation he ended up holding his breath in because of the suspense.

“Yes. According to the sages, the demi-humans are the result of humans receiving the blessings of the spirits. They then formed their own tribes and separated.”

“Are demi-humans and humans really that intimate?”

“Yes. For humans, they are our most loving neighbors.”

Calcedonia smiled sweetly.

Eru, who was waiting for Calcedonia to finish speaking, then said to Tatsumi.

“Tatsumi, do you have a minute? Isn’t it about time for you to start accepting requests as a Monster Hunter?”

At her words, Tatsumi’s expression stiffened.

Since then, Tatsumi had stepped into this bar a number of times. But not once did he get to do a job.

There were many reasons. Right now it was the coldest time of the years. So small animals and creatures that would be suitable for beginners weren’t many out there.

The beasts and monsters that are active in this period are all of the large builds, and they weren't something a beginner could handle.

And another reason was, Tatsumi still didn't have any teammates for a monster hunter team.

In the end, rather than going alone, forming a team with other people to accept requests was more efficient.

At first, one would think Calcedonia would be his teammate.

But right now Calcedonia's experience and ability as a monster hunter were several levels above Tatsumi's. That's why Eru crossed her out first.

A team should be formed by people of similar caliber. Though there weren't any official rules like that, this was a silent agreement between all monster hunters.

"A request... Does that mean you've already found a suitable teammate for me?"

"No, well... .. I still haven't found a newcomer to be your teammate..."

Eru seemed apologetic.

The monster hunters that were regulars at this bar were all people who had already formed proper teams, or people who liked to act alone. So he couldn't

form a new team with them.

If he joined people who already formed a stable team, that teams hunting efficiency would certainly go down.

Sometimes there were people seeking temporary partnerships. But recently there haven't been any of such groups or people here.

That's why the current situation was one where Tatsumi had no choice but to wait for a newcomer to join his team.

"..... That's why I found this so that Tatsumi could accept the request by himself."

Saying that, Eru passed to him a piece of paper. It was a request paper.

The contents of the request were, he had to collect a fixed amount of herbs.

"Though it's a hassle to collect herbs in this season, Tatsumi should be able to handle it right?"

Even if he was asked that, he had no choice but to agree.

Though he didn't exactly say how he did it, Tatsumi collecting the Grendan herb was enough proof of his abilities.

"Because the number of herbs collected in this season decreased rapidly, the

remuneration promised can't even be compared to before. So how about it? Want to give it a try?"

"Understood. Is now a good time?"

"Yeah. Actually, that's what I was hoping for. Then please memorize what the herb looks like, I'll make a projection."

Eru showed a few different kinds of herbs with her spirit magic, and Tatsumi used his cellphone to take pictures of them.

"Hey, Tatsumi. That... what is it?"

After seeing Tatsumi's cellphone, Verse inquired about it with great curiosity.

"This is... Right, it's a type of magic seal device. When I came here from my homeland I bought it with me."

It was probably impossible to accurately make Verse, a resident of this world, understand what a cellphone was. That's why she said it was a Magic seal device— In other words, a Magic item.

"Then, Miss Eru. I'll first return home once to prepare, and then go complete the mission.

Saying that Tatsumi stood up and said his farewell, then he left the [Elven Resthouse].

Of course, Calcedonia followed after him. Verse, who thought it was an appropriate time to leave, also stood up.

“Well then, Nanau. I’ll also return to the temple. You work hard okay?”

“Un!! Verse should also give it his all!!”

Nanau smiled innocently, and also stood up as she should go back to doing her job.

Verse, for some reason, started to rub the cute Nanau’s head.

“Geez. What are you doing—? Stop it—”

Though Nanau was complaining, her face showed her happiness.

Seeing those 2 like that, Tatsumi and Calcedonia looked at each other and whispered,

“What a nice mood, these two...”

“Yes, I’m sure they will become a happy couple.”

As Calcedonia looked up at Tatsumi and smiled, she hugged his arms into her abundant breasts.

“Hey, my dear husband. We should also try hard not to lose to them right?”

“A-Ah....Y-Yeah, that’s right.”

Tatsumi blushed while he felt the sensation of Calcedonia’s wonderful body coming from his arm.

Recently, Calcedonia wasn’t the one who’d get flustered so easily, as she couldn’t help but make Tatsumi’s heart race faster while saying things like that with a straight face.

Maybe this was the advantage of being an older onee-san, Tatsumi thought while absentmindedly staring at the horizon.

After Tatsumi, Calcedonia and Verse left the [Elven Resthouse].

On the first floor where the rowdy monster hunters gather, there was a new face visiting there for the first time.

“Please come in!! Welcome to the [Elven Resthouse]!! How may I be of service to you?”

The customer looked around the bar with a curious gaze, and seeing Nanau in right front , the customer nodded a few times and asked,

“— I want you to tell me something but, how exactly does one become a monster hunter?”

Chapter 44: Teammate Candidate

Tatsumi, after accepting the herb collecting request from the [Elven Resthouse] returned home with Calcedonia temporarily.

After taking out his equipment from the attic storage room, he put them on one by one with the help of Calcedonia.

A hard leather armor, a round shield, and a one handed sword.

All this equipment was what Calcedonia sent him.

They were pretty high-grade equipment, as Calcedonia wished they could help Tatsumi in times of danger, even if just a little, whilst he's on a monster hunter mission.

Of course, they weren't of the highest grade but for a newcomer, these were more than good enough.

Tatsumi also equipped other things such as a knapsack, a small pouch, a water canteen, a knife and a machete. After finishing he had Calcedonia double check just in case.

"Yes, everything's as it should be. But again, please be attentive at all times okay?"

"Yeah, I get it. By the way, are you going to stay home?"

"If I accompany you than your movement speed will lessen no? And it's only a herb collection request so I'll stay home and prepare for dinner."

"Is that so. Well, I don't think it would be that much of a problem if I transfer while carrying just Calcey but... The food you make is delicious so I'll be looking forward to it."

"I-If you say it like that...that...It makes me happy..."

Calcedonia blushed with a happy smile after she was praised by Tatsumi.

But the fair maiden kept it a secret that at that moment she imagined herself in his embrace, being carried like a princess in his arms.

“Then, I’ll be off.”

“Yes, have a safe trip.”

The distance between their lips closed until it became a kiss.

Tatsumi was walking on the highway going through the town of Levantes.

The sun was still high up. The place where the targetted herb grew was about 10 minutes away if he constantly used instant transition after leaving the town.

Tatsumi who judged that to be the case kept on walking on the snow shoveled highway.

But.

Tatsumi noticed that he was being tailed by a number of people.

Tatsumi pretended to look at the wares on the roadside stalls of the great highway and with a sidelong glance, he confirmed that among them, there were a few monster hunters he saw in the [Elven Resthouse].

I see. They probably want to investigate just how I was able to find the herbs in such a short amount of time.

Just like Eru said, the pay for herbs in this season is unexpectedly good.

When it becomes cold the amount of herbs that grow becomes less no matter what, and even if they do grow they grow under the piled up snow. So it takes great effort and time to find them.

That’s why the prices skyrocket in this season.

Of course, there were people who collected the herbs before the snow fell and preserved them but there were many herbs which would lose their medicinal property if not fresh so, in those cases, there was no choice but to leave the collection as a request.

And that was exactly the contents of Tatsumi’s current mission.

The monster hunters who were tailing Tatsumi right now probably wanted to figure out how Tatsumi would do it, and then imitate him to make a killing in this season where the herbs’ prices had skyrocketed.

Well, it's their freedom to follow me... but I've got no obligation to let them follow me right?

Tatsumi was wearing a fur jacket to combat the cold, but underneath he was storing up his mana.

To steal another's skill is because of one's desire to improve oneself and is by no means an evil. Tatsumi himself was aware of that.

But that doesn't mean they would be able to imitate Tatsumi's transfers even if they wanted to, and Tatsumi had no obligation to go along with their pace.

While steadily walking towards the south gate, Tatsumi took caution of any movement behind him.

Maybe they had no intention of hiding their presence from the start, they were following Tatsumi matching his pace a few long steps behind him.

Now then, just how long are they planning to follow me...

After reaching the gate, Tatsumi released all his stored up mana at once.

Recently, there's been a new monster hunter, a young one who's been frequenting the [Elven Resthouse].

Well, though he still hasn't taken on any formal requests, there's no harm in calling him a new monster hunter; something like an apprentice.

But the fact that this newbie was more intimate with the master of [Elven Resthouse] rubbed some of the regular customers here in the wrong way.

These regulars were folks who all were charmed by the master's lovely face, and came here on a daily basis to accept requests.

But of course, they were all aware that the master was a widow, and she still had lingering feelings towards her late husband.

Putting these guys aside, there were many who confessed their feelings to the master of this bar, but not one could make her nod in acknowledgment.

She had always treated the relationship as [The master of a bar and her customers]. No one could ever break this barrier. She treated them sometimes

with kindness, sometimes with harshness.

And because she was like that, they believed in her, some even started to worship her.

And obviously, when she became all intimate with that newbie the people who literally worshiped her didn't feel too good.

Among them, there were people who asked her what her relationship with him was,

"Hmm, let's see... Well, he's someone from the same country as my husband so, I guess I feel some closeness with him... And besides, if I had a child... If I gave birth to my husband's child then that child might've grown up to be like him. Thinking that, I just can't leave him alone..."

Like a mother looking over her son. Like an old auntie's mental state when looking after a relative's child, saying that, she laughed.

Seems like she had no sensual love for that lad. Understanding that, the devotees heaved a sigh in relief.

But even so, when she at times talked to that newbie in a language they didn't understand and laughed merrily, it caused the flames of jealousy to ignite in their chests once more.

Furthermore, this newcomer always had a beauty by his side.

Judging from the same earrings they were wearing on their ears, they were engaged.

And seeing him talk with the bar master while having a beauty like that in his arms, it was like adding fuel to the already burning fire. And after they learned that the beauty was the fabled <<Holy Maiden>> of the temple of Savaiv, the amount of oil poured into the flames of jealousy increased by several folds.

But even after all this not one of them tried to directly attack that annoying newcomer. Well, of course, there were people who at least thought of doing that but none of them tried to practically carry it out.

The master of the [Elven Resthouse] deeply hates fights between the regulars. If someone did surprise attack the newcomer in the and the bar master heard

of it, she would definitely ban the assailants from entering the bar for life.

And besides, anyone would notice that the newcomer wasn't some fresh blood.

Certainly, he looks inexperienced. But he definitely wasn't an average amateur. If one attacked him, he would definitely counter-attack hard.

Moreover, the <<Holy Maiden>> of the temple of Savaiv was beside him.

The <<Holy Maiden>> who was the only relative of the supreme pontiff of the temple of Savaiv. Even by accident, if one attacked her, that was the same as turning the whole temple of Savaiv into an enemy.

A fool who would attack even while knowing all this, certainly there wasn't one among the regulars of the [Elven Resthouse].

But still, among the master's adherents, there was a bunch that didn't find her relationship with the newcomer amusing.

And they by chance heard that the newcomer was going on a herd collection request today.

"..... That guy, taking a herb gather mission in this season... ain't he just a fool?"

"Ah? What, ya don't know? That new guy, he took a herb search test from the master before and completed it in like, a crazy short time."

"In this season? How?"

"Dunno, that guy didn't even tell the master."

"I bet the <<Holy Maiden>> used some kind of magic to help him right? She must've melted the snow with a fire magic or something."

"No, the <<Holy Maiden>> was here at the bar at that time. He went alone. So she's unrelated. And besides, if a flame was used to melt the snow then there's also a possibility of the herb burning too."

"Then...how?"

They both looked at each other in confusion and tilted their heads. They

couldn't even find a clue on how the newcomer came back with the herb in a short time.

"Hey... How about following that guy and finding out how he did it? If we can somehow imitate that, then in this season, we could make a killing right?"

"That's sounds goods. The prices of herbs in this season aren't something to laugh at."

After deciding that they will tail the newcomer, they started to discuss the method.

The newcomer wasn't donning his equipment today. So first he should return home to prepare for the request.

If it's herb gathering, then the location should be near the forest in the south. Of course, he would exit from the south gate.

Judging that, they waited by the main highway leading to the south gate and decided to follow him after that.

And just like they thought, they saw the newcomer equipping his gear and carelessly walking down the road leading to the south gate.

"So what now? Should we secretly follow him from here?"

"What? We could just openly follow him from here. Trying to mimic other's techniques isn't always a bad thing. And we monster hunters are people who live by copying other peoples' skills right?"

Deciding on their objective, they started to follow the newcomer with a fixed distance.

After confirming that he left the south gate, they also followed suit.

Though the plains were piled up with snow, the south gate which had numerous people coming and going every moment had none.

They thought that after passing through the gate, the newcomer would stick to the road as much as possible and head to the forest. But when they noticed the figure of the newcomer was nowhere to be seen, they opened their eyes wide in surprise.

“H-Hey!? That bastard new guy, where the hell is he!?”

“There’s no mistake that he passed through the gate!! Maybe he’s hiding somewhere near here!?”

“H-Hey!! I-Isn’t that the newcomer!?”

Looking at the direction one of them pointed at, they could certainly see the silhouette of the said newcomer.

“H-How did he get that far.... It hasn’t even been that long since he passed through the gate right...?”

“And, I don’t see any trails of him walking on the snow... He would at least have to part the snows here if he wanted to walk that far but where’s the trail...?”

“W-Wha! Hey... That newcomer... Isn’t he gradually getting further and further away...?”

Saying that, as they once again looked at the newcomer, his figure was indeed getting smaller by the second.

“How the hell is he moving so fast in this snow.....?”

In the end, all they could do was to stand there, stock still and watch the back of the newcomer get further and further away.

Tatsumi who arrived near the forest using the usual <<Instant Transition>> started using his magic to remove the snow and take pictures of the herbs that were underneath with his cellphone to compare then with the with the ones Eru showed him before.

Certainly, this time, he couldn’t finish it as fast as before because he had to gather a certain amount of various varieties of herbs.

But he was able to patiently repeat the same task over and over again, finally managing to collect the amount Eru told him to.

He carefully separated the herbs by their type and put them in his bag as to not damage them.

“... A job well done. Now all I got to do is to return to the bar and pass them to miss Eru.”

He looked at his wristwatch and judged that there was still quite some time left until sundown.

At the entrance of the forest, Tatsumi took a little rest while he sat on the trunk of a fallen tree, exposed to the wind and snow.

He took out the bento prepared by Calcedonia from his knapsack and ate it. Then he gathered some stones to make a makeshift kitchen. He took out a saucepan and put some snow in it before placing it on top of the makeshift stone stove.

He used the aria of <<Ignite>> to light a fire and used that to melt the snow in the saucepan.

“..... Thinking back, it really was a good idea to get Calsey to teach me the <<Ignite>> magic.”

Recently, Calcedonia taught Tatsumi a number of handy spells that could help him greatly in everyday life.

But well, the only magic he could use practically now was the [If you use it, it'll definitely come in handy!] magic <<Ignite>> after a hard training session with Calcedonia.

Tatsumi who had no aptitude for the <Fire> system magic couldn't even cast the most elementary <Fire> magic <<Ignite>> unless he tried a few times, and the magic consumption was also great. But this <<Ignite>> magic which could substitute a lighter really was convenient.

Tatsumi used the hot water melted from snow to make some tea. After drinking the tea to warm his body up, he returned to Levantes.

On the way, he passed by a number of Monster hunters who were in dire distress trying to cross the snow-covered plains and used his <<Instant Transition>> to return to Levantes.

Tatsumi returned to the [Elven Resthouse].

After he opened the door to enter, he saw Eru with a troubled expression.

“Erm, Tatsumi. After you left there was this new person who came in to be a monster hunter but...”

Eru glanced towards the back. Tatsumi followed her gaze and saw a bizarrely dressed man standing there.

He was taller than Tatsumi by quite a bit. No doubt he crossed 180cm. He might've even crossed 190cm.

He was standing there without any openings. Even though he was wearing a fur overcoat you could easily tell he had a forged body underneath.

But what caught Tatsumi's eyes were his bizarre appearance.

His black hair and black eyes were of no surprise to Tatsumi. But it was Tatsumi's first time seeing someone with ashen brown skin, 4 eyes, and 4 arms.

“...Maybe...He's a Shade.....?”

“Yes. He said he recently left the Shade village. If it's okay with you, can you form a duo with him for now? Of course, if you end up thinking he is incompatible with you then you can dissolve the partnership anytime you wish.”

“Yeah.....Well, I don't mind but, does he know about me?”

“I said the said thing to him just now, that Tatsumi is a novice Monster hunter.”

Maybe he heard what they were talking about, the Shade came towards Tatsumi and Eru.

The glint in his four eyes was sharp, as he looked at Tatsumi with an appraising gaze.

Though Tatsumi felt a bit unpleasant because of the four eyes, it was no doubt that the Shade was still as calm and composed as ever.

That shade after stopping in front of Tatsumi rudely started to observe him.

Then, showing a grin on his face he said with a low resounding voice.

“... So you are the Tatsumi boy the mistress told me about? Humph, you look more capable than I thought~”

And with a wink.

The Shade youth than skillfully closed just one of his four open eyes at Tatsumi, who was currently dumbfounded at his unexpected tone of speaking.

“I’m called Jadokh. Let’s get along from now, ‘kay Tatsumi boy?”

The first demi-human shade Tatsumi ever met. And also his first monster hunt teammate candidate.

A shade with four eyes and arms, with an appearance of a handsome onee*.

(*ED note: The “onee” 「オネエ」 here that this is referring to is not “big sister” 「姉」 but an effeminate man. Picture someone like O.D. from Gatchaman Crowds or Alice from Rakudai Kishi no Eiyuutan. I couldn’t come up with a similar word in English that didn’t come across as a slur, so if you have any ideas, let us know.)

Chapter 45: Gift

They were occupying one of the tables in the bar, [The Elven Resthouse].

Jadokh the Shade, who became Tatsumi's monster hunter teammate (Temp), was also there.

But Tatsumi, who came face to face with Jadokh's true personality which could not be any different from his outer appearance, ended up staring at him fixedly for a while.

"Oh my? Maybe, is there something on my face?"

Jadokh showed a coquettish smile towards Tatsumi who was staring hardly at him and asked.

But the next moment his smile turned into a grin like that of a kid who loves to prank.

"..... Or, have you fallen for me on first sight? Oh my oh my, I really can't be helped. What an honestly sinful person I am."

[TLN : He says' Tsu.Mi.Tsu.Ku.Ri. with gaps. Imagine an Onee-san saying 'Hi.Mi.Tsu~' with a wink. Like that. You get it right? No? Whatever...]

Wink! With a sound effect, only one of Jadokh's eyes closed skillfully.

Jadokh had four eyes. Two among them were just like a human's placed horizontally on the front of his face, but the other two were on his forehead in an oblong position. That's why though Tatsumi was surprised at first, right now he didn't feel much unpleasantness.

More precisely, every bit of unpleasantness he felt was completely blown away before Jadokh's strong first impression.

"No no, that's impossible. I, I don't have such hobbies."

Tatsumi made a calm tsukkomi to Jadokh. Seeing him retort in such a calm manner, this time Jadokh was the one who was surprised, as he raised an eyebrow.

"Rather than that, mister Jadokh....."

"Oh gosh, no! Just call me Jadokh. But I'm still calling you Tatsumi boy 'kay? And no need to use such formal speech."

Jadokh threw a flying kiss towards Tatsumi in fluid motion.

Tatsumi seemed to see an illusion of a heart shaped something floating towards him, as he slightly squinted his eyebrows.

But, that was all the reaction he showed. Seeing him so calm on the other hand, made Jadokh squint his eyebrows hard.

"Then Jadokh. Just like Miss Eru said for now we're going to be hunting

partners. So won't you tell me how you fight? And what your speciality is?"

"Humph! My speciality is, thi~s."

Saying that, what he pushed towards Tatsumi was a huge double handed war-axe and two small one handed battle staves.

The war-axe was 2 meters tall, and it should be quite heavy too. The image of Jadokh standing up while holding the war-axe would emit quite the terrifying pressure indeed.

And although the battle staves were single handed, they too were fearsome weapons with heavy weight.

"A war axe and two battle staves... destruction oriented aren't you?"

"Obviously. Because no matter what kind of enemy it is. I can blow them away."

Though slim, Jadokh's body should be forged well.

In the first place, Jadokh's from a tribe of warriors. If it's battle techniques, then he should be very proficient.

In addition, Jadokh was wearing a hardened leather armour on his torso.

But if he was wearing, suppose, a full body metal armour, then he would be

perfect as a human tank.

“Then, it’s my turn to ask questions now. Can I?”

“Yeah. I use a one handed sword and shield. Also, I’m being partial here, but I can use magic.”

“My! So Tatsumi boy was a mage? Rather! That’s not what I wanted to ask.”

With a spark.

His four eyes glinted with the light of sincerity as he asked Tatsumi directly.

“From now, I’ll ask everything honestly. Tatsumi boy, I want to ask. Doesn’t Tatsumi boy find me... repulsive?”

The fact that he was different from his surrounding was something he realized when he was a child.

But even if he realized, no matter how he tried to correct himself he was unable to.

Even though his body was gradually growing like a man, his heart was not.

Even in his home village, he never lost to anyone in a battle. But he never got his peers’ recognition.

Disgusting!

Isn't he possessed by a <Devil>?

What a failure!

In a small community such as theirs, he knew what was being said about himself even if he didn't want to.

But even so, he continued his training.

For Shades, strength was everything. So as long as one had enough strength, one or two personal quirks didn't matter.

But even in that society Jadokh wasn't acknowledged.

Even though his body was that of a man's, the heart was a woman's.

That's why, he left the village.

He has heard that within the human community there were people called monster hunters.

If you could hunt a mighty and powerful monster, than that was enough to make people tip their hats off to you.

Then, maybe that was the place where he belonged.

Thinking that, he— or maybe it's better to say she?— left the shade community.

“Before reaching this place... I've always been looked at like I was an odd creature by the humans. There were some who even directly scorned me. But of course I forcefully made those guys into my companion after that.”

After smashing their 'thing'. – Jadokh said with a scary smile.

“But Tatsumi boy you.... You're different from them. Maybe, Tatsumi boy knew people like me once?”

Certainly, Tatsumi was surprised when he first heard his tone.

But even if there was surprise, there was no revulsion in his eyes like everyone else's.

“Yeah... well it's not like I know them directly but... There should be quite a lot of people like Jadokh in my wor-.... Home country.”

By [people like Jadokh], Tatsumi meant people he saw in variety shows, the various 'Onee-samas' that come up time to time.

Nowadays, there were even talent shows for Onee-samas as they had a firm standing in modern society. If you turned on the TV, then the probability of you coming across a show with an Onee-sama was quite high.

And among those Onee-samas, there were even those unthinkable crazy types who could not be seen as anything but monsters taking the stage just for the laughs.

Compared to them, the well ordered Jadokh in front of him could by no possible chance make him feel repulsed.

“Of course, I was surprised at first but I don’t think I was disgusted you know? Besides, now that I think about it you should have a case of gender identity disorder.”

“.. Gen—iden.... What? What’s that?”

“Hmm.... how should I explain this?”

In modern Japan the understanding regarding gender identity disorder was deep, but this world shouldn’t even know it exists.

“ Err.. In general, something like a small mistake on god’s part?”

“ God’s...mistake?”

“Yeah. Originally a male soul should go in a male body. But by some mistake a female soul was put in a male body. That’s why the one who is at fault should be the god who made the mistake, not Jadokh.”

“W-Wait Tatsumi boy!!! Is it okay to say god was wrong!? If a priest in some temple hears this then it’s going to end up as big trouble!?”

“No it’s okay. Even though I might not look like it, I myself am a senior priest at the temple of Savaiv.”

Tatsumi showed Jadokh his designated holy crest, and Jadokh kept staring at him blankly.

“T-Tatsumi boy... J-Just who are....you...?”

“No no even if you ask me that... I’m a priest at the temple, and an aspiring monster hunter?”

But well, his position in the temple was something to pity about more likely.

Jadokh was still looking at Tatsumi in shock, but slowly a smile crept into his face.

And that smile, slowly became dazzling.

But Tatsumi, who met Jadokh for the first time today, didn’t notice that much.

Then, Eru interjected.

“Yes, Tatsumi! Good work on the herb gathering mission today. Here’s your reward.”

Saying that, she handed Tatsumi a few tens of silver.

“Because the herbs you gathered were more than enough, and they were very fresh too, I added a little extra!”

“Thank you very much.”

While thanking Eru over and over again, Tatsumi looked at the coins in his hand with a flood of emotions.

It could be said that this was Tatsumi’s first income in this world.

Not like the income he got as a priest, which was on Giuseppe’s recommendation, but money he earned with his power alone.

Actually it might be just a small amount, but for Tatsumi it was worth more than thousands.

“This is the first payment Tatsumi got as a monster hunter right? Why not buy a memento for it?”

He couldn’t buy anything too grand with just some tens of silver, but if it was knives or other daily things for monster hunters, then it was possible.

“Actually, I already decided how I will spend this money.”

Tatsumi replied to Eru while putting the coins in his pouch.

Eru responded to Tatsumi with a smile, and then she looked at Jadokh who had lowered his back after the interview with Tatsumi with a sidelong glance.

Even just a while ago he was surrounded by a menacing aura. But after talking with Tatsumi for just a while, his aura became even somewhat gentle.

(Just like I planned, Tatsumi could do something about it.)

Due to how his appearance and character differs, Jadokh should have been through horrible experiences till now.

But for Eru who lived in Japan like Tatsumi, she felt no repulsiveness from Jadokh.

That's exactly why Eru wanted to pair Jadokh and Tatsumi as a team.

Because if it was Tatsumi— if it was Tatsumi who just like her, lived in Japan, and came into contact with many cultures there, he would accept Jadokh as he was. Not judging him as an oddity, but as a person.

And certainly, right now Jadokh was in a cheerful mood.

She didn't know exactly what happened, but it seemed like Tatsumi was better than she expected.

(Maybe, Tatsumi just might have some great achievements as a priest)

Eru thought while looking at Tatsumi, who in just moments blew away all of Jadokh's displeasure.

Tatsumi walked along the road of Levantes after leaving the [Elven Resthouse].

Jadokh rented a room at the [Elven Resthouse] after that and said that he would call it a day.

After leaving his home village, he has been journeying all along. Now that he finally realized his goal of being a monster hunter, he decided give his body a good rest.

After peeping along a number of stalls along the road Tatsumi finally saw something he was satisfied with.

He then bought it with almost all of the cash he earned today, and left for his home sweet home, where Calcedonia was waiting with a content face.

"I'm back."

Tatsumi entered the house after opening the door lock with the magic pass.

Right now there was a red firing burning in the fireplace, which warmed up the house plenty.

"Welcome back, dear. How was the day?"

“Yeah, it went well.”

Tatsumi showed her a thumbs up.

“Is that so? As expected of my husband.”

Calcedonia grabbed Tatsumi hand and led him to the warm fireplace.

After making Tatsumi sit on top of the fur carpet, she hugged him from behind— but was for some reason obstructed by Tatsumi.

“E-Erm.... dear?”

A-Are you displeased with me?

That’s what her face was saying, and her expression was vivid. But Tatsumi then gently stroked her head.

“?”

Calcedonia felt something out of place where Tatsumi stroked her hair, so she put her hand there and....

She felt something hard there.

Then with great care, as if she was handling a treasure, Calcedonia brought that object in front of her eyes.

Right now, there was something in her hand.

It was a single piece of hair ornament.

It was made of wood. It's surface was curved with some simple designs. She could tell at a glance that it wasn't something expensive, but a rather cheap ornament.

"D-Dear... this is...?"

"Yeah, I bought it with the remuneration I got today. Well even if I said that, I didn't have much money so I couldn't buy anything expensive. So I searched for something that would match Calsey within my budget and bought this."

Tatsumi said shyly with a smile. And Calcedonia was listening to him with her eyes slowly clouding over.

"Really, thank you for everything until now. Calsey has been taking care of me all this time. That's why..... I wanted to use the first money I earned to gift something to you, as my thanks."

"Dear... .."

Calcedonia was still looking at Tatsumi, even forgetting to wipe the tears off her face.

"But with a cheap thing like this, it's nothing compared to what Calsey has

done for me so far. It doesn't balance out at all... So, will you still accept it?"

"Yes!!... It's a hair ornament I received from my husband... I'll treasure it til I die...!!"

Calcedonia grasped the object in her hand tightly, and embraced it in her heart.

Certainly, this was a cheap object. Cheap enough that even a kid might be able to buy it if he tried.

But for Calcedonia, this was far more precious than even the most valuable gold and silver treasure.

After finally managing to stop herself from crying, Calcedonia threw herself into Tatsumi's embrace.

"I'm sorry, dear.... C-Can you please... put this ornament on my hair...one more time?"

While her cheeks were buried in his chest, Calcedonia looked up at Tatsumi with her upturned eyes.

When she first summoned Tatsumi here, Tatsumi was only a bit taller than her.

But now Tatsumi's height had grown, and he was almost a head taller than her.

After receiving the ornament from her, Tatsumi once again gently put on the ornament of her hair.

Today, there was a rumour that the <<Holy Maiden>> of the temple of Savaiv was wearing a strangely cheap looking hair ornament.

A high priest who was working with her actually saw her wearing it, and asked her why she would wear such a cheap thing.

“Certainly it is cheap. But to me it’s more precious than any treasure in the world.”

Is how she replied haughtily.

Chapter 46: Hunt

Although getting a foothold on top of the snow was exceedingly difficult, it's nimble body was not restricted by it.

As if it was running on an open plain without snow, it used its legs to kick away at the snow as it chased after its prey.

The Snow Lizard, a 1.3 meter tall monster that could stand up on its two hind legs. If you measured from the tip of it's tail to the head it was a 2 meter long being.

With its evolved hind legs, it had great jumping power. It was a comparatively small, but carnivorous, monster which lived in small packs.

Originally, lizard type monsters were poikilotherms (ED: In layman's terms, a cold blooded animal). If the temperature went down, they would go into hibernation, ceasing all movements. But, maybe common sense like that did not apply to the creatures of this world, or maybe there was some other reason.

With its whole body covered in white scales, this lizard could adapt perfectly in this cold environment.

Even now, one of the snow lizards jumped up into the air, and used its sharp claws on the legs to tear apart its prey. This attack coupled with the falling velocity of the jump could even bring down a tree with a single kick.

But.

“Humph, too slow~”

It was the creature judged as a prey by the snow lizards. It let out a fearless grin. It raised two of its four arms that each held a battle staff above head, and easily blocked the attack of the snow lizard.

And then, it released the power in its body at once. The snow lizard once again jumped above its head. No! It was thrown above head with great strength, as the prey used its remaining two hands, which held a giant war-ax, to violently mow down the snow lizard.

A low sound rang out across the snow covered grove. And then, the white snow above the ground was covered in darkish, red coloured blood.

The snow lizard's body was severed in two as it fell to the snowy ground, spilling blood, flesh and entrails on it.

The supposed 'prey' of the snow lizard — Jadokh the Shade, moved back a little in order to avoid the blood and entrails that was falling from the sky.

“My, I'm completely dirty.”

Though he was speaking lightly, his eyes were already filled with a sharp glint, searching for the next 'prey'.

Deciding the nearest snow lizard to be the next target, he moved unimaginably nimbly on top of the snow towards the poor 'prey'.

The snow lizards, which have adapted themselves in a snow covered environment, could obviously move fast in it.

Repeating their small mincing jumps again and again, they drive their prey, which can't move in the snow as it pleases, into a dead end, and then go for the kill. This was their hunting method.

But the prey this time could move on top of the snow at an equal speed, or maybe even faster than, the snow lizards in this environment.

One of the snow lizards chased after the prey while baring it's white fangs.

But the prey— Tatsumi, warded off the fang with his buckler and in the next moment he vanished.

In the blink of an eye he appeared in the snow lizards' blind spot, and attacked its scale covered hide with his sword.

Blood gushed out from the newly opened wound.

But the blood did not touch Tatsumi, as the next moment he once again vanished.

After that, he appeared and disappeared time and time again, draining away the snow lizards' stamina.

Before long, the snow lizards movement became visibly sluggish, as Tatsumi

delivered the final blow.

Tatsumi and Jadokh. The hunt of these two novice monster hunters, Calcedonia was quietly watching from a distance.

There was no worry in her ruby red eyes. If it's Tatsumi and Jadokh, they shouldn't lose to the likes of snow lizards.

Even if they got wounded, as long as it wasn't a large or fatal injury, she could use her healing magic. The two, having that in their mind, could hunt with relief.

Before long, the last snow lizard of the group was defeated.

The noisy sounds all stopped, as the surrounding fell into silence.

The only sounds left were the gentle swaying of the leaves with the breeze and the loud breaths of Tatsumi and Jadokh who were exhausted from the long battle.

Confirming that there were no more monsters left in the surrounding, they sheathed their weapons and headed towards Calcedonia.

"Good work, you two. It was a really good battle."

"Humph, thank you Calsey, dear."

"How about you Calsey?"

“I’m fine, dear. No snow lizards came this way.”

“Leave it to us. It’s the job of a monster hunter to protect his employee too.”

The employee that Jadokh mentioned were labourers, who would carry the spoils of battle, and do other odd jobs for the monster hunter.

An employee doesn’t have any rights over the spoils as he didn’t directly participate in the battle. So other than the money paid by a monster hunter as remuneration, the spoils won’t go to him.

In most cases, people with similar battle strength form hunting teams. That’s why, novice monster hunters often join an advance monster hunter team as an employee to gain experience and learn how to fight better.

Compared to Tatsumi and Jadokh who were novices, Calcedonia was much more experienced as a Monster hunter.

Normally, Tatsumi and Jadokh were ‘below her status’. So there was no reason for her to become their employee. But for some reason she became the employee of the team and accompanied them in the hunt. As for what the reason was, is there really a need to explain it?

And Calcedonia, who was a veteran Monster hunter, was currently reviewing their battle.

“Certainly, as a [Fighters] you two fight wonderfully. But as a [Monster

Hunter], it was most certainly a failure.

At the harsh criticism, Tatsumi and Jadokh stiffened. But neither of them voice out in rejection and continued to listen to what she had to say.

“Monster hunters bring back the hide, fur, fangs, claws, bones and sometimes even the internal organs of their prey as materials. They then sell them to earn a living. That’s why, they try their hardest to not damaged any parts of the monster that might become sellable. Certainly, if it was a large sized monster, then it would be okay to attack over and over again to shave away at its life. But for small monsters such as snow lizards, the preferred way is to hit their vital point and end the battle in an instant.”

Calcedonia’s gaze then moved behind them, where the corpses of the monsters Jadokh and Tatsumi killed laid.

Some of them had been cleaved in two by Jadokh’s superhuman power, and some of them had innumerable small cuts all over their body. At a single glance you could see that the [Commodity Value] they had was close to zero.

“If this was a subjugation mission to get rid of a beast that had been laying waste to fields then it would have been fine. But dear, your mission this time was to [Hunt]. And not to [Hunt] for food but [Hunt] for materials. If you see it from that viewpoint, then the [Hunt] this time is obviously a failure.”

Being so severely judged by Calcedonia, Tatsumi powerlessly dropped his shoulders. And Jadokh, he too loosely hung his for arms down, as he gazed at the sky.

The reason why Tatsumi and Jadokh went out to hunt Snow lizards this time was because they were a newly formed team, they wanted to confirm each other's strengths.

Of course, selling the monster spoils they got from the hunt was also an objective.

The hide of the snow lizards are good for cold protection, and they are visually beautiful too. So in the winter they can be sold for making overcoats, and even defensive gear.

Also, it's meat was filled with nutritions. In this winter were small animals were scarce, they were a good source of food.

But as Calcedonia said right before, the hide of the snow lizards they hunted before were filled with cuts. That would definitely strike hard against the price so they had to be prepared mentally. Fortunately the meat was still good so it should sell for a good price.

After taking in the last bit of criticism Calcedonia had to offer, they quickly went on to dismantle the corpses with her help.

"..... Both of you look really used to this...."

Seeing the two dismantling with such efficiency made Tatsumi mutter that in surprise.

Certainly Tatsumi had trained his body after coming to this world. But simply being strong and being able to live in the wild were two different things.

No matter how strong one was, or how strong the monster he could defeat was, that alone could not guarantee that a person can live out in the wild.

Because battle techniques, and techniques to securely obtain food from the nature, were two different techniques.

Tatsumi had yet to study techniques such as efficiently dismantling prey, or obtaining food and materials without harming their value.

“It’s alright. If it’s you, then I am sure you can learn them in no time.”

“Yes, I’ll properly remember how Calsey does it.”

“Okay. Then, first about how to skin this part. You have to keep this area in check while———”

For Tatsumi who grew up in modern day Japan, the scenery of a beast being taken apart really wasn’t one he was eager to see. But for him who decided to live in this world, who is aiming to become an exorcist after becoming a brilliant monster hunter, this was a path he could not avoid.

While forcibly pushing the bad feeling down his throat, he kept looking at Calcedonia’s hands as she explained the ins and outs of the job.

Tatsumi and Calcedonia were getting along perfectly while dismantling the monsters.

Jadokh, who was watching them from a bit further away, had a pleasant smile on his face.

“.....Really, Tatsumi boy is full of surprises.”

Jadokh muttered quietly, as to not let them hear him.

When Tatsumi and Jadokh wanted to find a suitable target to test each other's skills, news of a group of small snow lizards appearing in the suburbs of the capital reached Jadokh's ears.

No matter how much the snow lizards adapted in the cold, the amount of animals that can be their food in this season decreases harshly.

That's why they appear near human habitats like this from time to time.

Snow lizards didn't pose much threat. And as long as it wasn't too huge of a group, then he and Tatsumi should be able to deal with them.

So after consulting the two of them, they decided to hunt the snow lizards.

For other novices like them, snow lizards were moderately hard preys. And besides, they weren't the only ones who were going after the group of monsters.

So before the others get to them first, they decided to finish the hunt. The next day, they decided to start preparing for the hunt.

On the appointed day of their departure, Tatsumi brought along Calcedonia to meet up with Jadokh, who was waiting in front of the [Elven Resthouse].

Seeing Tatsumi bring along a lady, Jadokh's eyes opened wide in shock. And after learning that the lady was the fabled <<Holy Maiden>> of the Temple of Savaiv, his eyes opened even wider.

And moreover, he then learnt that the <<Holy Maiden>> was his fiancée. She was going to accompany them as an employee.

At this point, Jadokh's mouth was gaping wide open, and his mental state was in a mess.

But Jadokh's time to be shocked didn't just end there.

He soon realized an even more shocking fact.

After searching for the rumoured group of snow lizards in the said forest, they fortunately bumped into the group quickly.

Tatsumi and Jadokh took position for battle quickly, and Calcedonia who was the employee to shelter in a safe zone.

That's how the start of the battle played out. But, as soon as it did, Jadokh was hit the greatest impact he felt all day.

Tatsumi, who was right beside him, suddenly disappeared, and in the next moment, he appeared behind the snow lizard group.

“.....what?”

Even though it was in the middle of a battle, Jadokh just stood there staring at Tatsumi.

“Mister Jadokh!!”

Calcedonia’s sharp voice woke him up from his trance. And he noticed one of the snow lizards was coming straight at him with it’s fangs brandished.

He immediately thrust the war-axe into the snow lizards open mouth. The pitiful snow lizard was blasted away with a mouth full of smashed fangs.

“My, how careless of me... But... still....”

Though he was still conscious of the battlefield, he kept looking at Tatsumi’s figure with his eyes.

Tatsumi repeatedly appeared and disappeared. He always positioned himself in the snow wizards blind spot.

“That... is that maybe... the <<Instant Transition>> magic, of the legendary <Sky> magic system?”

In the past there was only a single person who managed to use <Sky> magic. And <<Instant Transition>> was something almost synonymous with <Sky> magic. So of course, Jadokh had heard of it.

Certainly Tatsumi mentioned that he was a mage. But for him to be a legendary <Sky> system mage.

“.....Really, just who is he... that boy..”

He swung his weapon, and killed the snow lizards in the surrounding. But his eyes still chased after Tatsumi's back.

Engaged to the <<Holy Maiden>> of the temple of Savaiv. And a user of the legendary <Sky> system.

From what he could see, Tatsumi and the <<Holy Maiden>> weren't in a predetermined engagement by their parents, but they were actually truly in love with each other. No, rather, the <<Holy Maiden>> was the one who was completely head over heels for Tatsumi.

Maybe, did I just form a team with someone who might become a big-shot in the future?

That thought flashed through his mind, as he grinned.

His curiosity towards Tatsumi grew even larger, as in his mind he decided to work together with Tatsumi from now on, no matter what happens. He then turned his attention towards the snow lizard in front of him.

Tatsumi, who was covered in fat and blood, somehow managed to finish the dismantling work.

After equally distributing the gathered meat, hide, fangs, claws and bones, they decided to return back to the capital for now.

It was then.

Jadokh's ears which boasted high sensitivity picked up a faint sound.

"Be careful, you two. There is something nearby."

Warning Tatsumi and Calcedonia in a low voice, he carefully scanned the surroundings.

As the three held their breaths like that, finally a white something came out from a nearby thicket with a rustling sound.

".....Huh!?"

"Oh my?"

"Eh.....?"

They all opened their eyes wide in disbelief at what appeared.

Because,

What staggered out of the thicket and appeared before the three was a completely naked human lady.

Chapter 47: Giant Snow Lizard

The naked lady who appeared from within the thicket.

At first she was surprised seeing them, but then a look of relief came to her face as she collapsed powerlessly.

She then fainted.

“E-Erm....? A-Are you okay..?”

He wanted to quickly rush over to help the lady but then suddenly everything went dark.

He was panicking for a moment not being able to comprehend what happened, but the voice that came from behind made him calmed down.

“Y-You mustn’t!!! Dear, you cannot look at the naked body of a woman other than mine!! If you want to see one, then I’ll oblige whenever you want wherever you want!! So you absolutely cannot look at another naked woman!!!!!”

The one who was hugging Tatsumi from behind and covering his eyes was of course, Calcedonia.

He could feel the warmth of her body from behind. If they weren’t wearing leather armour now, then Tatsumi could have enjoyed the touch of her soft breasts.

Feeling a bit regretful about that, Tatsumi called out to Jadokh who should obviously be amazed right now.

“O-Ok, Jadokh. Sorry, but can I leave that lady to you?”

“Jeez, it can’t be helped.”

There was an obvious tint of amazement in Jadokh’s voice.

But Tatsumi, who had his field of vision covered, and Calcedonia, who was busy covering Tatsumi’s eyes, didn’t notice.

That Jadokh, who was helplessly, yet happily, smiling at the two of them.

“Then, I’ll look after this woman for now. Calsey should take Tatsumi boy somewhere else in the meantime. After that, I might need to borrow Calsey’s power.”

At a glance, the lady had nothing that looked like an external injury. But she might have some internal wounds or bone fractures.

If that was the case then Calcedonia’s healing magic would be necessary to treat her.

And when Jadokh raised a bitter smile seeing Calcedonia dragging Tatsumi away, he walked towards the collapsed woman but,

A roar strong enough to shake the trees around the area sounded out.

Jadokh reflexively dropped to his knees and held his weapon up, surveying the surrounding without negligence.

Though he couldn't judge what kind of beast would make that roar, he could judge the direction it came from.

No mistake about it. The roar just now, it came from the direction the unconscious lady came from.

If that was so, then it was hard to even consider the lady being unrelated to the master of that roar. Though the reason was not clear, she was probably running away.

"Calsey."

While keeping his eyes on the thickets, Jadokh asked Calcedonia who was behind him.

"The roar just now... ... can you guess what made it?"

Calcedonia separated from Tatsumi, and without letting her guard down started to ponder of a bit.

"... Yes. I remember hearing a roar identical to this before. Probably, it's a giant snow lizard."

“Giant snow lizard?”

Giant snow lizard, as the name implies, was a larger version of the snow lizard.

It had a body almost twice as big as a normal snow lizard. And it was the boss of a snow lizard pack. Packs led by a giant snow lizard had, in most cases, a far greater number of snow lizards than normal, and frequently, they would be stronger too.

“But, this pack of snow lizards.... Their number is a bit too low for them to be led by a giant snow lizard, I think.”

Calcedonia said while looking at the scatter snow lizard corpses around the place

The pack that Tatsumi and Jadokh defeated, their number was even smaller than the usual snow lizard pack. And the number was overwhelmingly smaller than a pack led by a giant snow lizard.

“... Let’s think about that later. Right now rather than that...”

While wielding his weapon, Jadokh slowly back stepped to where Tatsumi and Calcedonia were.

“... Can we win? If we were to fight that giant snow lizard.”

Calcedonia who was asked again sunk into thought.

Tatsumi and Jadokh, counting herself too, they shouldn't be any weaker than a Giant snow lizard.

But even if they could win, they would not be able to overwhelm the giant snow lizard in a battle.

It would be a long drawn out battle. In which they had to prudently shave away the giant snow lizard's life little by little.

But, they could not spend too much time here. In front of them was a naked lady lying unconscious on top of the snow.

It would be difficult to fight while protecting her, and if she was left like that for too long then the chances of her dying from cold wasn't low.

"... .. We could win but, I think it would be safer to take that woman and retreat for now."

"My, just like I thought. Jeez."

There was no need to face that giant lizard right now.

They didn't come here on a request, but for personal training. So there was no problem if they returned to town now.

The thing to be concerned about, was that a giant snow lizard appeared in the vicinity of the capital.

But rather than taking the risk to face it here, it was safer to return back to the [Elven Rest house] and tell Eru about it.

There were a lot of able monster hunters among the regulars of that bar. If Eru spoke to them, then a strong team of monster hunters would immediately set out to subjugate the giant snow lizard.

“No helping it then. Dear, this is an emergency so, please bring that woman here as fast as you can.”

“Understood.”

Like Jadokh, Tatsumi had his weapon out and was vigilantly eyeing the surrounding. Hearing Calcedonia’s order, he transferred to the lady, and the next moment he transferred back carrying the lady with him.

“Jadokh! Come here!”

“Roger~”

As Calcedonia was covering the lady with an overcoat, Tatsumi shouted at Jadokh.

He touched Calcedonia who was holding the fainted lady with his right hand, and touched Jadokh with his left.

“Since you aren’t accustomed to it, you might get dizzy.”

“Eh? W-What? What are you planning to do to me?”

Jadokh teased even though he knew what Tatsumi’s intentions were. Ignoring that, Tatsumi began to gather the mana in the area.

Transferring 3 people – 1 of them being a demi-human – was a chore even for Tatsumi.

The distance he could jumped lessened, and the fuel consumption increased. But today, he was resolved to be a bit reckless.

While firmly recognizing his comrades’ presence, Tatsumi activated <<Instant Transition>>.

Along with her consciousness, her eyes slowly opened.

She realized that a fair lady with light blonde hair and pretty blue eyes was looking at her with an anxious face.

“Ah, are you awake?”

Noticing that she regained consciousness, the blonde lady smiled gently.

As her mind became clearer, she realized that she was lying on top of a bed.

“... where am....?”

“This is a bar called the [Elven Rest house]. I am the master of this bar, Erulula Zaphyra Fyrasilula Akatsuka. Because it’s such a long name you can call me Eru.”

The smiling woman who called herself Eru. Looking closely, she had pointy ears. Was she an elf?

“...[Elven Rest house].....?”

She had recollection of that name.

A place where skilled monster hunters gathered. One of the most famous bars of the capital.

Maybe one day she could come and go out of that bar as she wished. She would talk about this dream of her’s with her comrades a lot.

Thinking to that point, suddenly her head cleared up at once.

A noticeably huge snow lizard.

And the remains of normal snow lizards thrown about in the surrounding.

As the giant snow lizard noticed them, it raised a chuckle.

The crimson red eyes of the lizard, they sleepily gazed at them——

“Aaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!”

She suddenly screamed, and curled herself up on the bed, as if to protect herself from something.

“...Uuuugh.... My head’s still spinning.....”

Occupying a table in the bar, a four armed man was sprawled on top the of the table while he complained.

“Oi, I brought water. You should feel better after you drink it.”

Near that man’s head, a youth put down a beer mug full of water.

“Thank you, Tatsumi boy.... But, repeating that revolting transfer over and over again, I am surprised you are okay.....”

There was admiration, or maybe there was amazement in his comment. The four armed man — Jadokh — said that with a confusing tone.

“Yeah... .. I was the type who wouldn’t even scream on a roller coaster... maybe I was born with good semicircular canals.”

“..... Tatsumi boy, something you mutter some incomprehensible things you know?”

He didn't even have the strength to raise his head, as he said that with his head on the table.

Wryly smiling at Jadokh, Tatsumi also took a seat at the same table.

Then, something soft leaned on him from the side.

"Ahn~.... I am also dizzy... so nurse me please."

Rather than feeling dizzy, the one who spoke had joy seeped all over her face. Of course, it was Calcedonia.

Just like when she was a bird, she used to rub against Tatsumi. Right now, with her ahoge swaying from left and right, Calcedonia was snuggling up to Tatsumi.

The monster hunters around them were looking over them with tepid gazes, as they started to make fun of him, but Calcedonia paid them no heed.

And even when looking at this lover of his with a troubled gaze, Tatsumi did what she asked.

"..... I wonder if she's okay... that person, just what happened to her?"

"There was no sign of outer wounds... Well there were scratches and small injuries all over her body, along with some old scars. That lady, she's probably a monster hunter."

After transferring over and over, they finally returned to the city. They barged into the [Elven Rest house] and explained everything to the round eyed Eru.

After hearing the whole thing, Eru ordered the female employees to bring the unconscious woman to the second floor, and along with Calcedonia she started to treat her.

After examining her with Calcedonia, Eru judged that even though there were some light wounds, she was not seriously injured. Using Calcedonia's healing magic, they were able to finish her treatment quite fast.

All that's left is to wait for her to wake up. Leaving the rest to Eru, it was just a while ago that Calcedonia returned to the bar where Tatsumi was.

"... Just what happened huh?... well, we should be able to learn that after the lady wakes up."

Tatsumi, Calcedonia ,and Jadokh then turned their gaze towards the stairs that led to the second floor.

It was just a bit later that Eru rushed down with a grave expression on her face.

Chapter 48: An Unfortunate Encounter

After hearing the rumour, the girl — Miloulle and her comrades offered their prayers to the God of Evening Moon, Gavavi for the unexpected good fortune.

Incidentally, Glavavi is the guardian deity of the night and is primarily worshipped by those active during the evening such as prostitutes and minstrels.

For the same reason, Glavavi is said to be the guardian deity of gambling dens which open at night, thus from that connection, is also known as a god that bestows good luck.

“H-Hey, Tadd. Is it really true?”

“Yeah, it’s true. It seems like a small pack of snow lizards have been sighted near the royal capital.”

Tadd, Ganz, and Kuoran. These three young men of the same generation along with the 16 year old Miloulle were a 4 man monster hunter gang.

With shoulder length brown hair and eyes of the same colour, her lean but flexible body somewhat reminded you of a cat. Her large, sharp eyes strengthened that cat-like impression even further.

Her looks were good too, and she herself, was aware that her companions would sometimes look at her mesmerized.

But rather than being concerned with romance, she was more interested in spreading her name as a monster hunter. That was Miloulle’s wish.

Born and raised in the same village, the four of them were always together no matter what they were doing. It hadn’t been even one year since they had left their home village and come to the capital in order to become monster hunters.

After arriving in the royal capital, they earned their daily wages by taking on various jobs by the day as they learned how to fight at the temple of the Sun God, Golaiva.

After working hard for half a year, they finally managed to save enough funds to buy sets of used weapons and armour for everyone, and finally began their lives as monster hunters.

They started off with simple requests such as gathering herbs. The snow was already starting to pile up, so the reward was higher than usual, but finding the targeted herb was not very easy. Even so, the four of them frantically dug up the snow to complete the requests, and just when they were starting to save up a little money.

The inn and bar they were staying in was called West Wind's Embrace. It was a place where many new monster hunters like them stayed. Today, they were discussing what the next request they take should be.

Tadd, who just heard the rumour, excitedly returned to where his companions were.

"Speaking of snow lizards, they aren't that strong of a monster. Even novices like us should be able to handle them. How about it? Why not give it a try?"

"Aye, why not? I've been getting sick of shoveling snow all day for herbs lately."

"Yeah, finally it's time for us to show our skills."

Tadd, Ganz and Kuoran were eager to go.

Of course, Miloulle was also in the mood. By hunting these snow lizards, she wanted to give a jump start to her life as a monster hunter.

"But... Can we really do it?"

The one who said that was Ganz who was the most cautious of the bunch.

"It'll be alright. A bunch of snow lizards shouldn't be a problem if it's the four of us."

"From what I've heard, even though it's a pack, the size is quite small. And also..."

Tadd looked at Miloulle.

"We have... Miloulle. If we have her magic, there is no reason to fear some

snow lizards.”

“Y-Yeah! That’s right! We have Miloulle and her magic!”

“Also... When Miloulle uses her magic... Hehehe.”

Following Tadd, the other three looked at her as well.

There was also lust mixed into those gazes, and when Miloulle noticed it, she frowned in displeasure.

“Hey! I won’t use magic so easily, you hear! I’ll only use it as a last resort after all! In the first place, my magic is completely self taught, the system seems to be a bad one, and has a very short duration!”

“We get it.”

“Even so, just having your magic on hand puts us at ease. We’re really lucky having you as our comrade.”

“Oi, Kuoran, didn’t you say something before about, if we get comrades, then they might be as beautiful as one like the Savaiv Temple Holy Maiden?”

“Wait!! You and Ganz also agreed with me!”

“Hmh! I see how it is you three. Then I’ll kindly leave you all so you can try your luck getting the Savaiv Holy Maiden as your comrade!”

“He-hey now, it was a joke. Just a joke. After all, there is no way the Savaiv Temple Holy Maiden would join a bunch of novices like us.”

In response to Tadd who tried to smooth it over in a fuss, Ganz and Kuoran nodded frantically.

Of course, Miloulle wasn’t actually angry, nor did she also intend to separate from them.

However, she also judged that she couldn’t forgive them too easily, so in the end, in exchange for each one of them treating her to a meal, she calmed her fake anger.

Once things were decided, they had to hurry.

The rumour about the pack of snow lizards would continue to spread. In which case, they needed to hunt them down before any other monster hunters

get to them.

Since the rumoured location was in the vicinity of the royal capital, after preparing a few days worth of food, they quickly departed as the sun was rising the next day.

With their preferred weapons in their hand and wearing hardened leather armor, the four of them follow the path according to the information Tadd had obtained.

Before long, Miloulle, who had the best eyesight among them, caught sight of the footprints of several animals.

“Hey, take a look at this.”

“These are...snow lizard footprints?”

“I’ve seen them before, so there should be no mistake.”

“Alright, the footprints seem fresh, so let’s follow them.”

Nodding at Tadd’s words, Miloulle and the rest advanced through the snow field to follow the footprints.

Following the footprints, they left the meadows and entered the forest.

While clearing away branches and pushing their way through bushes, the four of them cautiously followed the footprints.

Before long, they caught sight of a large lizard with white scales.

They had finally caught up with it!

The grip on their weapons tightened unconsciously.

They renewed their determination for the hunt.

However.

However, the scene that laid before them was not what they were expecting.

Before them was a single gigantic snow lizard.

They had heard before that a boss that commands the pack would occasionally appear within snow lizard packs, so although this was unexpected, it wasn’t something to be surprised about.

This pack had a boss? Thinking that, the four raised their vigilance. But the situation was strange.

The gigantic snow lizard; great snow lizard ignored Miloulle and her friends who were approaching, engrossed in its meal.

There was no way the giant snow lizard didn't notice Miloulle and her friends approaching. That was because they had their weapons in hand as they slowly approached, as if encircling it.

However, the giant snow lizard didn't stop eating.

"...He-hey...."

Tadd, who was at Miloulle's right, pointed at 'it' with his trembling finger.

Around the giant snow lizard, the bodies of other snow lizards which appeared to be from the same pack were lying around. Their body which was usually white in colour were dyed deep crimson in many places.

"Is, is it...eating its own pack...?"

Correct.

The thing that the great snow lizard was mindlessly eating. That thing was likely other members of its own pack.

"I-I never heard of snow lizards... eating their own kind."

Miloulle wasn't able to tell who had whispered that.

That was because she saw it.

As the giant snow lizard was deliciously devouring the internal organs of its own kind, its eye alone turned around and looked at her.

The giant lizard's eye which shone a deep crimson.

Miloulle clearly saw the crimson eyes narrowing in a manner similar to when a human would snicker at someone.

Finishing her story up until to that point, the girl that Tatsumi had saved, Miloulle, shut her mouth.

She was currently sitting up on a bed in one of the rooms of The Elven Resthouse.

Of course, she was wearing clothes; simple ones borrowed from Eru. With her mouth shut, Miloulle hung her head and didn't move.

But Eru, Tatsumi, Calcedonia, and Jadokh who watched over her noticed that her shoulders were slightly trembling.

She was crying.

She cried while stifling her voice and desperately held her tears in, so only her shoulders tremble slightly while she cried.

From that, Tatsumi and the others understood what had happened to her comrades.

Miloulle's shoulders continued to tremble. Looking away from her, Eru turn to Calcedonia.

"As you have heard, the situation is severe. A demon beast possessed by a devil... A monster has appeared near the royal capital. Though I doubt it will enter the royal capital, the possibility of travellers along the main road being attacked is extremely high."

"That's right, I will quickly report to the temple and request for the dispatch of a devil sweeping master. Of course, I will also move out too. Master--"

Calcedonia's ruby-like eyes looked straight toward Tatsumi.

"—I have been fighting 'devils' together with Morga up until now. That Morga is currently not here... Master. Will you fight together with me?"

Compared to Morganeich, the "Freedom Knight", the current Tatsumi wouldn't hold a candle against him.

And perhaps he would only slow Calcedonia down.

However.

However, he noticed a swaying flame of anxiety deep within the gaze of Calcedonia. He had noticed it.

Even she felt anxiety. Toward the prospect of fighting demon beast with

someone other than Morganeich.

Of course, Calcedonia trusted Tatsumi and believed in him.

However, she had no experience with fighting monsters together with him. Even if she trusted him, it was still different from pairing up with Morganeich.

Tatsumi and Morganeich were completely and utterly different. Even their strength as a devil sweeping master were vastly different. Even so, Calcedonia still asked him to fight with her.

That made Tatsumi extremely happy.

That's why Tatsumi replied immediately. While wishing for the anxiety of the person precious to him to blow away.

"Of course. If you are fine with me, I'll fight together with you anytime."

He didn't think he could fight like Morganeich. However, if push came to shove, he could at least get Calcedonia away from danger.

"...Thank you very much. I believed master would answer like that."

Calcedonia smiled as her cheeks flushed.

Her smile made Tatsumi's chest feel warm. At that time, some more reliable words were added into the mix.

"Aran~ If Tatsumi-chan fights then of course I would also go. While I have also no experience fighting against a "devil," I can at least become a shield for you two."

The one who grinned broadly with an intrepid smile on her graceful countenance was of course Jadokh.

"Is that fine?"

"Of course. We are comrades, right?"

Jadokh winked playfully.

"Alright. I will count on you then."

"Leave it to me!"

Bam. She patted her chest and nodded, full of confidence. Tatsumi fist

bumped with Jadokh.

“Then, Master, please go to the temple and tell grandfather about this case. I will head back to home and make preparations. After that let’s meet up again here.”

“Understood.”

There was a considerable distance between Savaiv temple and ‘Elven Resthouse,’ but for Tatsumi who can use teleportation, it wouldn’t take a lot of time.

Tatsumi and Calcedonia nodded at each other. Just as they, Jadokh and Eru included, were about to leave the room.

Milouille who had kept silent up until now called out toward their backs.

“Wa-wait...!! Ple-please, ...let me go together with you!!”

Chapter 49: Those who started to make a move

Thump. Bam.

That sound originated from her right.

Whilst still dumbfounded, Miluoelle moved her sight to that place.

There was Tadd, with blank look in his face.

He was pushed down by Giant Lizard's hind leg, while its sharp claw pierced his chest.

"Hagh...Gah..."

From Tadd's mouth, breath and red liquid leaked out.

With its well developed hind legs, the giant snow lizard had leaped toward

Miluoelle and the rest from its original position, which should have been quite far apart, and with the momentum of its rush it planted its hind legs' nail in Tadd's chest, piercing his heart.

The giant snow lizard moved slightly above Tadd. And the result was the nail gouged even deeper toward Tadd's chest, scattering something red toward the snow in their surroundings.

Right after the grating sound reached Miluoelle's ear, a sound of wind blowing, and then something snapping followed after.

While stepping on Tadd's body without care, it swung its elastic and long tail toward Kuoron who was next to Tadd.

Kuoron who hit by its tail can't even make a sound as he was blown away and crashed back first to a tree nearby. And he crumpled on the trees' roots just like that.

Only at that time did Miluoelle finally come to her senses.

"Ru-run!!"

She shouted at Ganz who still alive.

Tadd's signs of life were already starting to fade. There is no human would

stay alive after their heart was pierced, especially by those sharp claws.

That can also be said about Kuoron. Kuoron, who was crumbled at the tree's roots, had his neck twisted in an impossible direction.

This might sound cruel, but Miluoelle chose to prioritize her and Ganz's life.

The giant snow lizard in front of them is not an enemy they can defeat with their combined power. That's why their only option is escape.

While gritting her back teeth, knowing they are unable to recover her comrades' corpses, Miluoelle ordered Ganz to escape. While she herself, using her trump card, magic.

The duration of her magic is extremely short. However during that time, her physical ability, attack power, and defensive power will rise dramatically.

Using all those reinforcement, she will make herself a bait and let Ganz escape. And then when she discovered an opportunity, she will also run away.

That's the plan Miluoelle thought in a short amount of time. However that plan quickly went awry.

Ganz didn't follow Miluoelle's direction, instead he rushed toward their fallen comrades.

"O-Oi Kuoron!! Tadd!! Are you fine!?"

—Don't go over there Ganz!! Run!!

Miluoelle tried to shout, but no voice come out, and it won't reached him either.

Ganz who ran hastily towards their comrades, never reached their side.

A shadow fell towards the running Ganz.

When he noticed and looked up, the sole of foot of the giant snow lizard already right in front his eyes.

"...Eh?"

Ganz let out an idiotic voice. At the same time, his head was kicked by the hind leg of giant snow lizard, and then crushed like a ripe fruit.

—ah.....ah.....

Miluoelle can only looks at that scene in a daze.

And while the giant snow lizard looked at her with its crimson eyes, something inside her breaking apart.

—...AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA.....!!!!

Shouting a strange voice in her heart, the frenzied Miluoelle rushed toward the giant snow lizard.

Her speed after being reinforced by magic is equal with the giant snow lizard.

In an instant she covered the distance between them and then used both of her hands to punch at it with all her might.

Normally, there is no way she would be able to pierce through the scales of the giant snow lizard. However, with her attack power which had been reinforced with magic, in addition to her frenzied state, she successfully pierced through giant snow lizard's scales.

A red line ran straight at giant snow lizard's white body, and from there, black blood spurted out.

At that time, the giant snow lizard let out a pained roar.

Succumbing to anger, Milouelle continued to mindlessly swing her arms.

And when her anger subsided, the figure of giant snow lizard no longer there. Did it feel wary of her after she was reinforced with magic and injured it, and decided to run away? Or perhaps Miluoelle herself unconsciously ran away from it while in her frenzied state?

While she noticed she already walked trudgingly, naked, in the middle of snow piled forest. And it seems her mana already used up at some point of time.

Losing both her comrades and all of her equipment, Milouelle walked naked in the middle of snow without destination.

When she hugged herself because she couldn't stand the cold, she heard a beast roar from somewhere.

Is it the roar of the wounded and angry giant snow lizard, or is it from different beast?

She couldn't determine which, but when she heard that roar, panic run through her body.

With no equipment, no mana, and no comrades, she currently has no means to defend herself.

Driven by her fear of being attacked by beast, without even confirming her direction, she broke into run.

Naked, in the middle of the snow piled forest.

"Please...take me together with you...revenge for my comrades...no, I don't think I will be able to defeat it alone...But at least, let me stand to watch the defeat of that giant snow lizard...please...I beg you."

Miluoelle bowed her head as she pleaded. However she also quickly raised it again and gaze toward Tatsumi and co.

Miluoelle's eyes were wet with tears. However there was also conviction in them.

Calcedonia and Jadokh who noticed it turned toward Tatsumi.

"...What should we do, master?"

"...What should we do, Tatsumi-chan?"

Asked with same question by both of them, Tatsumi racked his brain.

Bringing her back with them certainly has some merit.

However brief, she has experienced trading blows with the giant snow lizard which had become a demon. Moreover, she even wounded it.

That experience might become valuable asset, and it doesn't seem she will drag them down.

And even if they refuse to let her join, she will, undoubtedly, move alone to challenge the giant snow lizard.

In that case putting her under our command is better. That was Tatsumi's judgement.

“Alright. Milluoelle-san, let’s go together. However you must follow our orders. Never ever try to take individual action. That’s the condition.”

“Alright...ah...I understand. Errm...”

“My name Tatsumi...Tatsumi Yamagata. And they are—”

“—I am Calcedonia Yamagata. Pleased to meet you, Milluoelle-san.”

Calcedonia cut in the middle of Tatsumi’s introduction, and introduced herself while smiling sweetly. Moreover, she shrewdly added ‘Yamagata’ in her name to keep Milluoelle in check.

While stifling her laughter, Jadokh introduced herself following her.

“...I am Jadokh. As you can see I am a shade. Pleased to meet you, Milluoelle-chan.”

Jadokh winked, looking at Milluoelle, who couldn’t help becoming flustered.

“Alright, we are going to prepare, during that time please rest a bit more, Milluoelle-san.”

“You can call me Milluoel. Since it seems we are close in term of age.”

“I see, then please call me Tatsumi.”

“Please call me Calce.”

“Of course, you can also call me Jadokh.”

After changing their way of addressing each other, they started to move toward their own goal.

Eru who watch over them from slight distance away, smiling happily despite feeling a bit out of place.

“They might become a decent team. I’m looking forward to it.”

Losing her comrades is certainly a tragedy for Milluoelle.

However, although this might sound cold, anyone who worked in the monster hunting business should have this level of determination.

Eru hoped Milluoelle would be able to overcome this tragedy and grow up as monster hunter.

And then her existence would also stimulate novice hunters like Tatsumi and Jadokh.

Even while looking forward toward their exploits thereafter, Eru too started her own preparations.

Since a demon appeared near the royal capital, she would also give her assistance in defeating it.

When she headed toward her room to prepare.

Suddenly a question crossed her head.

“.....Come to think of it, what system is Milluoelle’s magic from? And what kind of magic is it?”

Giuseppe, who received information about the demon’s existence from Tatsumi, gave a formal order to Tatsumi and Calcedonia for them to subjugate it.

Of course, there are some in the upper echelon of the temple who raised objections from the fact that Calcedonia who has high ability in devil exorcism and also has a lot of achievements teamed up with nameless monster hunters.

However, after knowing Tatsumi is among them, of course the sound of objections died down in its own.

The second <sky> magician, and also Calcedonia’s fiancé. Additionally, he received direct instruction from Giuseppe, and Tatsumi, who lately aspired to become supreme priest, is already famous not only among Savaiv temple, but among the other temples, and even a part of Largofiely Kingdom.

Tatsumi who able to use <sky> magic, which is the most effective against <evil>, and Calcedonia the famous <<Holy Maiden>>. If the two of them teamed up, there would be no one who would object.

After all, the demon subjugation this time is a direct order from the supreme priest. Even the kingdom wouldn’t be able to object.

In due form, Tatsumi and Calcedonia accepted the order from supreme priest, while Jadokh and Milluoelle will be employed under them.

However there’s no way they would belittle Jadokh and Milluoelle. Because

both of them will fight shoulder-to-shoulder against the giant snow lizard together with Tatsumi and Calcedonia.

Additionally, Eru will also be added in their line up.

Though, rather than as fighting power against giant snow lizard, Eru's main role is searching the enemy.

Currently the demon in question is lurking inside the forest near the royal capital. However the definite hiding location is unknown. If they tried to find it with sending many people, the monster which was possessed by <devil> will quickly leave the royal capital because of its intellect.

The reason Giuseppe only ordered Tatsumi and Calcedonia is because of this.

In the time they could ask for cooperation from the other devil exorcist from Savaiv, or from the other temples to hunt it, the demon would have already left.

That's why, in demon subjugation using a small number of people is the most effective, that's what experience taught them.

According Eru's proposal, they will rely on spirit to find the demon.

Spirit user able to communicated with spirits. She planned to ask forest trees' spirits and snow spirits about the whereabouts of the giant snow lizard.

Spirit exists everywhere. If you want to know something you just need to ask them—is what usually people think, but the reality is not like that.

Why you ask? That's because Spirits and humans—demi-humans as well—have great differences in mentality.

Especially for spirits, they lack the concept of time. They can only differentiate between 'now' and 'past', and they also don't have any concept about 'future'.

For example, if you ask them 'Is there snow lizard inside the forest?' they will only answer 'I saw it before'.

Moreover the spirits also can't differentiate between giant snow lizard and normal snow lizard. They only recognize a snow lizard as a 'big white lizard' with how big being quite ambiguous compared with human standards.

That's why when asking spirit you need to be meticulous.

Choose words that the spirits can understand, and you must analyze the spirit's words properly.

However, for Eru who is the founder of spirit magic, that problem undoubtedly will be easily solved and she can obtain beneficial information.

And so, the plan to subjugate demon with Tatsumi, Calcedonia, Eru, Jadokh, and Milluoele has begun.

Chapter 50: Right Before the Descisive Battle

In front of their eyes was the trace of the tragedy.

The place Tatsumi and co. stood was where Miloulle and her comrades encountered the <devil> possessed giant snow lizard.

Blood splattered in the white snow. The partly eaten snow lizards' corpses scattered here and there.

And among those partly eaten snow lizards' corpses, something that were certainly not snow lizards were mixed in.

"...Kuoron...Tadd...Ganz..."

Their corpses were so damaged that they didn't want to continue looking at it. Perhaps because their corpses were left in the snow, the decaying didn't progress much. Looking at their partly eaten corpses, Tatsumi desperately held down the nausea attacking him.

"...The snow lizard pack we subjugated...perhaps they ran away from the boss which was possessed by <devil>. I'm sure of it."

"Yes, I think so too. Near the royal capital, there were many sighting of small scale snow lizard packs. Perhaps in the beginning the pack was pretty big, however after their boss was possessed by <devil> and become demon, they were scattered."

Eru supplemented Jadokh's conjecture.

After they had re-examined the rumour of snow lizard packs sightings near the royal capital, they found out that the rumour could be heard everywhere.

Eru who managed inn-cum-bar knew very well about those rumours. That's why her conjecture couldn't be wrong.

While listening to their conversations, Tatsumi glanced toward Miloulle.

Right now, she was kneeling at the snow, and she didn't even hide her flowing tears.

Tatsumi could sympathize with her feelings, because he too had experienced

losing his family members all at once.

When he was about to be seized by the sadness of losing his family, Calcedonia snuggled up to Tatsumi's side and gently gripped his hand.

Tatsumi looked at Calcedonia, and Calcedonia also looked back at him. And then she smiled softly as if comforting Tatsumi. It seemed Calcedonia could grasp Tatsumi's mental state.

"Master, let's pray for those who fell in this place."

"Ahh...That's right."

As a priest, Tatsumi also learnt various types of prayers. Tatsumi stood beside Calcedonia, and they started to speak words of prayers together.

Among their voices, sometimes Miloulle's soft sobbing voices were mixed in.

Tatsumi and co. started to act after Miloulle calmed down.

First, they buried Miloulle's comrades; they couldn't bear to let their corpses to be weather beaten.

Before they buried the corpses, Miloulle took anything that could serve as a memento from their bodies.

"Tadon-kun, please."

After Eru said it while touching her earring, a mole-like animal appeared near her legs from inside the snow.

"Eru-san. What is that?"

"This child is my contracted earth spirit, Tadon-kun. When I was in Japan, I only had two contracted spirits, Picho-kun and Twirl-kun, but after coming here I contracted more spirits. Right now I have five contracted spirits."

Eru said it proudly. According what Eru said, the five spirits she contracted were water, illusion, earth, ice, and light spirit.

Hearing Eru's wish and using her mana as compensation, the earth spirit created a hole to bury the remains.

And then with Tatsumi and Jadokh's cooperation, the remains of Miloulle's comrades which had been wrapped by a spare coat were buried.

Although moving the remains into the hole with teleportation crossed Tatsumi's mind, since he felt it was impolite to the dead, he decided to return them to the earth with his own hands.

On top of the piled earth of burial, Calcedonia muttered words of prayers while sprinkling alcohol. It had two meanings—as offering to God and to purify them.

Different from Japan, in this place they don't usually offer flowers to the deceased, but generally they offer alcohol or food to God.

At the end, they once again prayed for the happiness of the deceased in the next world. After everything was finished, Miloulle faced Tatsumi and co. and deeply bowed her head.

"Tatsumi, Jadokh, Calce-san, Eru-san...Thank you very much, everyone."

"Ara, we only did what's natural. More than that, are you fine, Miloulle-chan?"

"Umm...Actually I don't think I can get over it immediately, however, if I continue to hesitate, I don't think I can face my comrades ever again. Additionally, the most pressing matter right now is..."

"Yes. To find the demon...the giant snow lizard, and defeat it."

Hearing Tatsumi's words, Miloulle nodded strongly.

Eru focused all her senses and attentively listened to the spirits' voices.

The ability to listen to the spirit's voice was the most basic ability to become a spirit magician, that is to heighten their hearing sense until they could hear voices that usually couldn't be heard—

The spirit's voices.

Using the words spirits use—the spirit language—Eru gathered the information about their target, the giant snow lizard.

To be blunt, the spirits' words were incoherent. Many of the ice, wind, and tree spirits talked to Eru as they pleased.

They even told things unrelated to what Eru asked.

Eru patiently listen to all of them and filtered the necessary information.

After finishing communicating with the spirits, Eru turned towards Tatsumi and co.

“The spirits said in the northwest direction there is a big white lizard. I don’t have any proof that it is the one we looking for, but I feel it is worth a try.”

“Hmm, spirit magic is handy. Ne ne, landlady. Do you think I can learn spirit magic too?”

Jadokh asked Eru with eyes glittering with curiosity. However Eru showed a difficult expression.

“Spirit magic is different from aria magic. In aria magic, you can cast magic as long you have mana, however for spirit magic if you can’t communicate with spirits, you won’t be able to use it. Communicating with spirits is mainly about feeling, so it is quite hard to explain with words.”

Demi-humans who received influence of spirit’s power would have higher aptitudes in spirit magic than humans. However for people who couldn’t sense the spirits, no matter how much hard work they put on it, they still won’t be able to sense them.

“Additionally, Jadokh has low mana reserve, considering that too, I think you should give up on magic....”

Hearing Calcedonia added that with difficult expression, Jadokh dropped his shoulder.

“Do you really want to use spirit magic?”

“It doesn’t have to be spirit magic, I just want to use magic. After all, among us I am the only one who can’t use magic. That’s a bit vexing.”

Jadokh said it while writhing in agony. It only dawned upon Tatsumi after he said it.

He and Calcedonia can use magic. Actually it was a bit different for Tatsumi but from the perspective’s of others, there was no difference since he did use magic.

Eru used magic in front them just now and according to Miloulle’s story, she

also use magic.

Indeed among the members right now only Jadokh can't use magic.

By the way, from the public perspective, to have magicians gathered in one team like this was actually quite strange.

"Eh? Tatsumi is a magician?"

"Well... from what Giuseppe said I am not a magician, but mana user."

"Giuseppe? Who is that?"

"Ah, Giuseppe is Savaiv religious organization supreme priest, Giuseppe Chrisphaez. Miloulle at least know that name right?"

".....Eh?"

Miloulle was dumbfounded. Of course she had heard the name of Savaiv religious organization supreme priest.

However since the name of an unexpected big wig flowed smoothly from Tatsumi's mouth, her thoughts were unable to catch up.

"Why-why the name of such important person come out here...? Eh? Eh? Perhaps Tatsumi is a son of noble?"

Now that she remembered it again, when they introduced themselves Tatsumi also said his family name.

"Well, no, I am not a noble. However Giuseppe is my teacher. And he is also Calce's grandfather."

Still with a dumbfounded expression on her face, now she turned towards Calcedonia.

"....Calce....Calcedoni...a...? Perhaps Calce-san is..."Saiaiv temple's <<Holy Maiden>>?"

It was common knowledge that 'Savaiv temple's <<Holy Maiden>>' was the granddaughter of Savaiv religious organization's supreme priest.

However when Calcedonia introduced herself, she didn't introduce herself as 'Chirsphaes' but 'Yamagata'. Miloulle also didn't expect such a famous person

would appear in front of her, thus she didn't connect Calcedonia with the <<Holy Maiden>>.

Received such a surprising truth which swooped her like a wave, she became disordered.

“By the way, you said you can use magic, right, Miloulle? What kind magic is it?”

Hearing Tatsumi's question, Miloulle who was still in a confused state suddenly turned frozen solid.

“...Mu-must I say it...?”

Miloulle let out a forced laugh. Tatsumi and Calcedonia reflexively looked at each other.

“Miloulle-san, we are going to fight the demon together here on. Isn't it common sense to know each other's powers first?”

“We-well, I understand where you are coming from, but...err...by the way what kind magic Tatsumi use? From what system?”

That was a blatant way to change the subject. However before Tatsumi able to say anything, Calcedonia cut in.

“Master magic system is <Sky>! The second person who can use <Sky> magic ever is none other than my master!!”

Calcedonia said it with pride. And she calmly emphasised 'my master' part in her speech.

“Eh...? No, no way? I heard <Sky> magicians only appear in fairy tales?”

While slightly blushing Calcedonia looked up toward Tatsumi who was beside her and affirmed it. It was clear for the three of them that the gaze she used toward him was filled with immense trust and confidence, also many things more.

“That's not a lie. I saw it with my own two eyes after all. I saw Tatsumi-chan use <Sky> magic...<<Teleportation>>.”

“<<Teleportation>>...?”

Eru showed a surprised look. It seemed she realized the reason Tatsumi able to collect herbs in short amount of time.

“So, what kind of magic Miloulle use? Can you please tell me?”

When Jadokh asked her, her eyes swam.

“It-it seems my-my magic is...from failure system, tha-that’s why I am ashamed to say it...My-my magic is self taught, from strengthening system. My fighting style is to strengthen my physical ability and defensive power and then fight in close combat. However, the activation time is very short, so I can only use it in short decisive battles... That’s enough right?”

Miloulle said it somewhat desperately to Calcedonia.

That’s because she was the team leader for this operation. She was a devil exorcist who had purified many <devil>. Tatsumi and Eru also agreed immediately when she Calcedonia nominated herself to take command of the team.

Since Tatsumi and Eru agreed to it, Jadokh and Miloulle also didn’t raise any objection.

“I know this is sound selfish...but when the time comes I will certainly use it. I promise...”

Miloulle walked toward Calcedonia and held out something. It was the articles left by her comrades such as hair and favourite short sword.

“When I use my magic these things might be lost...so, can you please hold on this?”

“Eh...?”

Although Calcedonia didn’t understand what she meant, she still nodded at held into those articles.

“Alright, let me explain again our strategy.”

Before they moved again, they reviewed the plan to deal with the demonified giant snow lizard.

“When fight against demons, we must never deal the final blow.”

Tatsumi and co. nodded silently as they heard Calcedonia's instructions.

<Devil> was a spirit life-form with no physical body.

That's why even if they killed the demon, it didn't mean they defeated the <devil>. Even if they defeated the host, the <devil> will only move towards another living creature.

In this world, there were weapons which could deal damage to the host and the possessing <devil> such as holy sword and holy spear, or in other words, <magic weapons>. However the number was extremely limited.

Weaken the demon, make its movement dull, and then use <Light> or <Holy> type magic, <devil exorcist>, to destroy it. That's the ironclad rule of demon subjugation.

"However this time you can defeat the demon. Use all your power to defeat the giant snow lizard."

However this time was a bit different. That's because Tatsumi who was the natural enemy of <devil> was here.

When they defeated the giant snow lizard, of course the <devil> possessing it would leave. Normally there was no way to see the <devil> which has left its host.

However, Tatsumi could sense it; he could recognize the <devil> which has left its host.

<Devil> which lost its host won't be a threat, and with Tatsumi's <Sky> magic, he could destroy it with ease.

"The fact that we can fight without holding back is reassuring."

"That's right. I will go all out from the beginning."

Jadokh and Miloulle brimmed with fighting spirit.

"I will support from the rear but I will also work hard!"

Eru who was the founder of spirit magic would certainly be helpful for Tatsumi and co.

“Alright, let’s go!”

Calcedonia.

Eru.

Jadokh.

Miloulle.

All of them nodded at Tatsumi’s words, and started to walk towards the location of the giant snow lizard.

Chapter 51: Another Mana User

“Eh...!? Miloulle is also a mana user...?”

Tatsumi asked in shock. Calcedonia nodded towards Tatsumi’s words in silence.

Right after Eru asked the spirits about the whereabouts of the demon beast, the party headed there with Miloulle walking beside Jadokh.

And with a slight distance between them, Tatsumi and Calcedonia guarded the rear.

“Yes. Before, she said her magic was self-taught. However, all magic incantations are already completed, in other words, there is no such thing as self-taught magic incantations.”

“That means, self-taught here means no incantation...and so the same mana user like me. But, is there no possibility her magic is a spirit magic like Eru’s?”

“There is no way the landlady wouldn’t notice it if her magic is spirit magic.”

Eru is the founder of spirit magic. Just like Calcedonia said, there was no way she didn’t notice if Miloulle’s magic was spirit magic.

“Additionally, Miloulle said the duration of her magic is short. I think it is another proof that she is a mana user.”

“I see. After all mana user constantly emits mana normally.”

Hearing Calcedonia’s explanation, Tatsumi was also convinced that her conjecture was correct.

Controlling mana without incantations, in other words, an ancient form of magic. To keep the magic active, the users need to continuously expend mana. And thus their mana will be depleted in an instant. Tatsumi is an exception because he can control mana from an external source, but it seemed Miloulle is normal.

“Then...the reason Miloulle didn’t say anything about her magic is because... she is a mana user?”

“I don’t understand that much...and also...”

Calcedonia tilted her head. And as usual her ahoge swayed.

Concentrating her consciousness towards her eyes, she saw the mana’s light from Miloulle’s body.

“...Her mana’s light colour is blue, I thought her magic is a derivation from the <water> magic system, however...”

Perhaps Miloulle’s mana comes from extremely rare mana system, thought Tatsumi.

A rare mana system meant that, just like Tatsumi’s <Sky>, there was no one who researched the spells. That’s why magicians who have rare mana system usually are mana user.

“...Well, though we don’t know the specific magic Miloulle has, the plan doesn’t change.”

“Yes.”

Coinciding with Tatsumi’s answer, Calcedonia smiled.

No matter what kind of formidable enemy awaited them, as long Tatsumi... the natural enemy of <devil> was there, there’s no way they will lose. At that time, Calcedonia was confident in it.

—That’s right.

At that time, they haven’t—

GAAAAAAAAANNNNNNN. A thunderous roar resounded.

At the same time, light gushed out.

That roaring sound and light’s true form was Calcedonia’s magic <<Thunder Storm>>. Thunder rained upon the designated area.

And when the thunderous roars and light stopped, next blew violent tempest of ice and snow.

The one who created the ice and snow tempest was Eru, who used the power of the contracted ice spirit.

However, Calcedonia's and Eru's magic was unable to seize the target.

Their target—the giant snow lizard possessed by <devil>—freely moved on top of the snow and easily evaded the magic's aim.

“Damn, it's too nimble!!”

Eru cursed.

No matter how many times Eru and Calcedonia casted their magic, the giant snow lizard kept evading them all. Their plan was to weaken it with Eru and Calcedonia's combination, as they were both excellent magicians, and then for Jadokh and Miloulle to finish it off. And lastly, Tatsumi will terminate the <devil> that separated from the giant snow lizard.

However, their plan was destroyed in the first phase.

The target giant snow lizard was more agile than Calcedonia and Eru predicted.

Calcedonia and Eru have experienced facing against giant snow lizards many times.

Using that experience as the base and added the variable of <devil>'s strengthening, they predicted the strength of the giant snow lizard.

However, when they met it for real, the ability of the target giant snow lizard was far stronger from their prediction.

And because of that, they were unable to seize the target from distance, alas only exhausted their own mana instead.

On the other hand, Jadokh and Miloulle who were tasked with close combat were unable to get close because of the giant snow lizard's bizarre speed.

Even now, whenever Jadokh rushed ahead and swung his two-handed battle axe or brandished his battle mallet, the giant snow lizard will casually hop out of his range as if ridiculing him.

And for Miloulle, since they unable to seize it the first time, she lost the timing to use her magic.

Let's turn back the time a bit.

Eru led the vanguard of Tatsumi's party. And suddenly, she stopped and looked around with a sharp gaze.

"...Something is here...! Please be careful...!"

There's no need to ask 'what is it?'. Tatsumi, Calcedonia, Jadokh, and also Eru, directed their gaze to the surrounding.

Among them, Miloulle put down the knapsack on her back and threw it to the snow.

"O, oi, Miloulle...?"

While still probing the surrounding, Tatsumi asked.

"Don't mind me. If I don't do that...it's because when I activate my magic everything I wear will break...to not let it be lost in the snow I use the knapsack as a landmark."

Miloulle said it with a red face.

Now that she said it, there was a red cloth wrapped in the knapsack she'd thrown. That's the landmark she talked about.

Currently, she only wore clothes and defensive cloak, but no armour. If what she said is true—well, there's no need to doubt her though—she didn't wear armour because she was convinced she needed to use her magic.

In her hand was a spear longer than her height. It seemed her main weapon is a spear.

By the way, because Miloulle lost all her belongings when she met with the giant snow lizard, for this mission, she borrowed money from Calcedonia.

Tatsumi and Jadokh wore the usual hardened leather armour and their usual weapons, while Eru wore a white-soft looking leather armour and a cloak over it. She also has a short sword on her waist, but that's nothing more than for self-protection.

As for Calcedonia, she didn't wear anything like armour. However, underneath her cloak, although it looked like any common grey robe without any ornaments, it actually was a magic-sealed armament that boasted higher defensive capabilities than a common metal armour.

In her hand, she has a single crooked, old-looking staff. However, that old-looking staff was also another magic sealed armament that was capable of heightening Calcedonia's mana.

"Tatsumi-san, Miloulle-san, please stop your discussion—"

While Eru rebuked them like that, suddenly her words were cut in the middle and she looked up.

From above the trees around them, a number of snow lizards fell down.

"They are not the giant snow lizard....but normal snow lizards!"

"Did it gather the survivors from the herd...?"

With weapon in hand, Jadokh and Miloulle quickly intercepted the falling snow lizards.

Although the aforementioned giant snow lizard only saw the herd as another food source, it seemed that because the wound in its hand inflicted by Miloulle, it used them as bodyguards to protect itself.

Miloulle's long spear successfully pierced the snow lizard's throat, while Jadokh battle axe pulverized one of the snow lizard's head.

However, of course, they unable to intercept all of them, some which safely landed in the snow, looking around and setting their targets to Calcedonia and Eru.

To protect the two of them who were not suited for close combat, Tatsumi stood between the snow lizards and them.

However, when he drew his sword and almost rushed towards the snow lizards, from his right and left, lightning and ice arrows flew and ended the snow lizards with one strike.

Tatsumi blanked, and when he looked behind, the two magicians showed him a sweet smile.

Normal snow lizards were not a problem for Tatsumi and co.

A little while after the start of their battle against the snow lizards, suddenly a roar of a beast resounded. It was a roar they had heard before—the roar of

giant snow lizard.

Hearing that roar, the snow lizards stopped fighting and started to run.

“...Did the giant snow lizard just ordered its underlings to retreat...?”

Jadokh stopped swinging his battle axe and then rested it on his shoulder as he followed the snow lizards with his gaze.

“What should we do, Calce? Let them go? Or pursue?”

“Let’s not chase them too far. However, from that roar, I can grasp the general direction of the giant snow lizard. Let’s head there while keeping vigilant.”

Hearing Calcedonia’s decision, the others nodded.

And then after rearranging their formation, their party started to move again.

This time Jadokh and Miloulle walked in the front as the vanguard. Right behind them were Calcedonia and Eru as rear guard and Tatsumi in the last line.

Using the direction from the roar and the footsteps of the snow lizard, they advanced in the snow-piled forest.

And then ten minutes later, something happened.

Suddenly from the snow, the giant snow lizard appeared and attacked them. It seemed the giant snow lizard hid in the snow, waiting for them to arrive there.

The one the demon targeted was Miloulle. Perhaps it remembered the fact that Miloulle injured it. Or perhaps it judged that Miloulle was the easiest target.

Because it was too sudden, Miloulle was unable to react in time against the attacking giant snow lizard.

With drool smeared sharp fang, it attacked Miloulle. The fang dug into her body and scarlet blood splattered around—was what the giant snow lizard expected, however, in reality, it closed its mouth without being able to bite onto anything.

When Calcedonia looked toward the giant snow lizard’s back, she can see

Tatsumi, who successfully brought Miloulle away from harm's way.

In the split second Tatsumi noticed the giant snow lizard attack, he quickly teleported to Miloulle's side and then teleported again toward the giant snow lizard's back.

"Master! Miloulle-san!!"

"We are fine! Just do it as planned!"

After Tatsumi answered Calcedonia's worried voice, they started as they planned.

Calcedonia started to chant a spell, while Eru called her contracted spirits.

As for Jadokh and Miloulle, they quickly guarded the defenseless magicians.

The first one to attack was Eru with her spirit magic.

"Rurra-kun!! Please!"

In front of Eru's fingertip, a ball of light with the size of small child's head appeared. This was Eru's contracted light spirit, Rurra-kun.

Rurra-kun shook its body and then from its surrounding smaller balls of light appeared. And then after shaking once more, the balls of light rushed towards the giant snow lizard.

The small balls of light—the light bullets rushed toward the giant snow lizard following their respective arcs.

When they thought the light bullets would land on the giant snow lizard's body, suddenly the giant snow lizard performed an overhead jump and barely evaded the rain of light.

The light bullets which lost its target collided with each other and then disappeared just like that.

The giant snow lizard soared in the air. However, it won't be able to move in the air. Aiming for that, purple lightning was released from Calcedonia's palm.

The purple lightning tore through the air and attacked the giant snow lizard which currently was still in the air. However, the giant snow lizard used its long tail to change its posture in the air, and then kicked the tree nearby and

avoided the purple lightning.

“No-no way—!”

“In the air...it can move like that in the air—!”

The two magicians became dumbfounded. Because the magic they believed would hit was evaded.

Normal snow lizards, no, even the usual giant snow lizards won't be able to evade their magic.

To think the giant snow lizard in front of them could evade it easily made Calcedonia and Eru freeze on the spot.

The sly demon didn't miss it and once again kicked a tree and attacked the two of them from above.

The claws of its hind legs glittered. If this goes on Calcedonia and Eru will be shredded by the sharp claws.

However, right before the giant snow lizard's claw reached them, the two of them disappeared. Of course, it was Tatsumi who brought them away through teleportation, again.

Taking some distance from the giant snow lizard, Tatsumi carried Calcedonia and Eru with both hands.

“...Calce, it seems we are the one trapped by the giant snow lizard...”

Tatsumi said it without letting the giant snow lizard out of his sight.

And then when Calcedonia's legs returned to the snow, she understood what Tatsumi trying to say.

“.....The snow here...it is softer than the other places...”

It seemed this place was where the snow blew and accumulated, and thus the snow still retained its soft property. Additionally, the snow was pretty new and has yet to congeal, in other words: powder snow.

The snow easily caught Tatsumi's party's legs and thus restricted their movement. Especially for close combat specialists like Jadokh and Miloulle, their mobility was shaved by a great amount.

On the other hand, for the giant snow lizard which adapted in a snowy region, its leg won't be caught by the soft snow and was able to move freely. And more than that, just like what it displayed before, this giant snow lizard was evidently nimbler than common giant snow lizard, and thus their difference in movement speed will become even more pronounced.

Anticipating Tatsumi's party, the giant snow lizard hid and waited in this place while using the other snow lizards to lure them here.

When they noticed, the other snow lizards standing beside the giant snow lizard and bare their fangs, intimidating Tatsumi's party.

Calcedonia and Eru, magicians who excelled in magic, Jadokh and Miloulle, warriors who excel in close combat. And then Tatsumi, the <Sky> magic user the natural enemy of <devil>.

Despite they felt it would become an easy fight earlier, they were forced to understand that currently, they were falling into an unforeseen predicament.

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Chapter 52: Miloulle's Magic

"We're changing plans."

The <devil> that possessed the giant snow lizard was obviously toying with Tatsumi and the others.

The first plan was a failure, progressing to a situation that required a different strategy.

"Master..."

Calcedonia had a worried expression flash over her face for an instant, but it was immediately replaced with a face full of determination. Her voice called out to Tatsumi that was standing before her,

"The only one that would be able to deal with the giant snow lizard's speed, in this bad footing, is a <Sky> mana user. But, this is a huge burden on Master..."

"Understood. Only I can do it, so I have to try."

"While Master is directly confronting the giant snow lizard, we'll fight against the other snow lizards, okay?"

In response to Calcedonia's words, the others simultaneously nodded in consent.

"After defeating the other snow lizards,

Jadokh and Miloulle, provide assistance to Master as much as possible. While the demon's movements have been slowed, landlady and I will finish them off with our strongest fire magic—"

"No, that's no good."

While Calcedonia was in the middle of giving out instructions, Tatsumi interrupted her,

"The person who will deal the last blow is... Miloulle. Leave it to her."

"M-Me...?"

The surprised Miloulle pointed at herself, and Tatsumi smiled.

“Yes. Get revenge for your old friends by killing it with your own hands. I’ll create that chance.”

“U-Understood.”

“When you see that chance, at that time, use all your power on one attack and beat him up.”

Tatsumi’s line of sight captured the giant snow lizard. At the moment, the giant snow lizard and its subordinates, who were slightly separated from Tatsumi’s party, were steadily watching them.

Those eyes that are sparkling in a red color, it’s as if they’re looking down on us, waiting for us to enter their trap, Tatsumi thought.

Once more, the giant snow lizard let out a roar.

At the same time, the giant snow lizard and several of the snow lizards charged at Tatsumi’s party.

“You guys can take down the small fries!”

Without even checking if his comrades had nodded, or rather, convinced that they would, Tatsumi disappeared from where he was.

Tatsumi abruptly disappeared, and in the next instant, he appeared directly in front of the giant snow lizard.

Eru and Milouille were shocked at the sight of that.

“T-Tatsumi disappeared...?”

“N-No way... H-He was really a <Sky>... user?”

Jadokh, who was battle ready with a weapon in hand, ran past the two girls who were unintentionally left absentminded.

“Stop it, both of you. Is this the time to be spacing out? Look, our guests are coming.”

Jadokh’s tone was light, but his gaze was piercing. Before that piercing gaze, there were several snow lizards.

As if they were gliding on the snow, the magic beasts bared their fangs and came running while clanging their claws together.

“Seriously... this snow is really hard to stand on, and it’s even more impossible to fight in, yet our opponents can move on it like it’s flat ground... Unfair!”

Jadokh gave a smile.

However, it wasn’t his normal bright smile; it was a ferocious smile that would come from a wild beast staring at its prey.

The snow lizards’ leader opened its mouth wide and started attacking Jadokh.

“Fufun. Doing such a thing like running towards here, this is a great help!”

Though Jadokh’s mobility was limited by the snow, it would be a different story if they came to him.

With his battle staff, Jadokh lunged into the widely-opened mouth of the snow lizard.

Having the battle staff thrust into its mouth as a counter to its attack, the snow lizard was lifted into the air. With the battle staff using the head as a fulcrum, the lower body swung towards Jadokh like a pendulum.

With another of his long battle staves, Jadokh swung horizontally, smashing both of the snow lizard’s legs. Then, in that situation, he used his battle-axe to swing downwards from the sky, splitting the snow lizard’s head into two.

“Ufu. Our goal today isn’t their materials so we can fight freely this time.”

Shifting his gaze from the dead snow lizard, Jadokh looked for his next prey.

“...You’re quite enthusiastic, aren’t you?”

Miloulle, who was standing next to Jadokh, asked that while keeping her spear at the ready.

“Of course? Tatsumi had confidence in us; he entrusted us with the task of killing the small fries. Because of his confidence, we have to live up to it, don’t we? A favor begets a favor. A grudge begets a grudge. And, confidence should be returned with confidence. That’s what our creed is. Besides...”

Jadokh took a fleeting sideways glance behind him.

“It looks like I’m not the only enthusiastic one.”

From behind, they could hear a sonorous spell’s aria. Of course, that aria was

from Calcedonia.

Passing by Jadokh, the snow lizard leaped towards the Calcedonia who was chanting the spell.

If it was a normal magician, it'd be fatal if the enemy attacked in the middle of the aria. But, without stopping the aria of her spell, Calcedonia countered the snow lizard's attack.

Spinning the staff around in her hand, she firmly hit the body of the snow lizard using the staff filled with the power of centrifugal force.

A dry snapping sound echoed, and the snow lizard collapsed onto the snow. Faster than the collapsed snow lizard could rise, Calcedonia completed her aria.

With the end of the staff, she thrust at the snow lizard, and a flamethrower-like blaze blew out at the snow lizard, scorching it.

Normally, in a forest like this, the〈Fire〉system's magic wouldn't be used. Flames burn the forest's trees and undergrowth, and it could spread uncontrollably.

However, right now, the surroundings were full of snow. In this season, the〈Fire〉system's magic could be used since the probability of the fire spreading is low.

The flames trapped the snow lizards, and their death throes only became louder.

In order to finish off those snow lizards, stalagmites rushed out of the ground, and, like spears, they stabbed through the bodies of the snow lizards.

"Thank you very much, landlady."

"No, I think you did more."

Setting down the staff, Calcedonia and Eru, who commanded the mole-like earth spirit, smiled at each other.

"...I also have to do my best"

Seeing those two going back and forth, Miloulle used the spear in her hands a few times, showing her own power.

“.....A-Amazing...”

Right before Miloulle’s eyes, a high speed battle developed.

Miloulle that had completely defeated the small fry snow lizards was wondering how Tatsumi’s battle with the giant snow lizard progressed, and scanned the surroundings with her eyes. Looking at the scene of it, she unintentionally murmured that.

The giant snow lizard was moving at high speeds on top of the snow, and Tatsumi was using all of the trees in the surroundings as footholds for three-dimensional movement. In this snow, a human chasing the giant snow lizard like that was basically impossible.

But.

But, a human was doing that right here.

The giant snow lizard leaped around at high speed, kicking off the snow and trees. However, Tatsumi chased after even faster.

No, he wasn’t faster. He was leaping over space itself, going to where the giant snow lizard was heading to ahead of time and inflicted wounds on it with the sword in his hand.

Small wounds littered the lizard’s entire body. While the giant snow lizard released a roar full of rage and irritation, it brandished a claw overhead.

However, at the next instant, the human figure that was its enemy disappeared, and appeared at its rear.

“———!!”

With a silent exhale, Tatsumi swung his sword. The sword blade was glowing with a golden mana, and, as it came into contact with the giant snow lizard’s body, a violent explosion occurred.

Tatsumi could use several types of magic. <Instant Transition>, <Acceleration>, <Self-Recovery>, and <Mana Strike>.

<Mana Strike>, a magic that could be said to be more like a sword technique, imbued mana in a sword, and, when it hit the enemy, the mana would explode outwards. It’s not a technique that attacks with mana from afar.

However, Tatsumi could use <Instant Transition> and <Acceleration>, so the distance to the enemy didn't matter.

Again, the sword's dwelling mana exploded out in streaks of gold, and the giant snow lizard's huge build faltered and swayed.

But, the giant snow lizard's entire body was covered in tough scales; its vitality was inhuman.

Tatsumi's sword slash could only inflict a scratch, and the mana explosion from <Mana Strike> couldn't inflict a severe injury either.

Since it was <Mana Strike>, if Tatsumi poured mana into the sword constantly, then it would be possible to break through the giant snow lizard's tenacious scales. However, without using <Instant Transition>, it would be more than impossible to catch up to the giant snow lizard. He had no choice other than to use a half-charged <Mana Strike>.

After making the giant snow lizard eat another <Mana Strike> to the back, Tatsumi used <Instant Transition> to move next to Calcedonia.

"...C-Calsey, please...!"

Tatsumi was breathing heavily. His shoulders were heaving intensely, but despite being in the snow, his entire body was sweating.

Tatsumi had an inexhaustible supply of mana, but not stamina.

Repeatedly using magic and performing those intense maneuvers in the battle naturally made him exhausted.

While breathing heavily, with Tatsumi's shoulders going up and down, Calcedonia touched his shoulder and used her <Stamina Restoration> magic to temporarily restore his stamina.

"...Are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. With this, I can still go for a while."

With a deep breath, Tatsumi disappeared. And, when he appeared from the rear of the giant snow lizard, he swung his mana-clad sword.

However, Calcedonia understood.

Her magic was said to be stamina restoration, but it had limits. As it was, Tatsumi's stamina would slowly whittle away until it completely ran out.

Something had to be done. Calcedonia took her eyes off of Tatsumi and frantically thought.

In short, it would be best if this entire area had less snow. However, even a child would understand the difficulty of achieving that.

It would be impossible for her <Blaze> magic to melt the entire surrounding area's snow, and, even Tatsumi using <Instant Transition> to remove this vast range of snow, would be difficult.

Tatsumi's movement skill can only move things that he clearly recognises. Because of that, things like "this whole area of snow" is too unclear and can't be transported.

"...At least, if only there were some kind of landmark..."

The previous time, when Tatsumi went to gather medicinal plants, he drew a circle on top of the snow that could be said to be a landmark. It would be great if she could do the same thing, but the snow was hard to stand on and drawing a circle around the whole area would take too much time.

"...Something... A magic that would be good, something that could draw a mark on top of the snow... M-Magic...?"

At that time, Calcedonia had a light bulb flash in her mind.

"L-Landlady!!"

Calcedonia turned her head to look at Eru, who was beside her. And then, she talked about what she just thought of with her.

His sword arm was heavy.

Nevertheless, he mustered strength with pure willpower and continued swing his sword.

However, his sword attacks were only being repelled by the giant lizard's tenacious scales.

Constantly breathing heavily, Tatsumi used <Instant Transition> to distance

himself from the giant snow lizard.

“Master!!”

The voice of the girl he loved reached the ear of Tatsumi, who was constantly breathing roughly.

When Tatsumi took a sideways glance, while being careful about the giant snow lizard, he could see that Calcedonia was frantically pointing to something.

—What...? What’s Calsey pointing to...?

Tatsumi, still clueless, saw a red glitter in the corner of his eye.

—Red...light...?

Unintentionally, Tatsumi followed the red light with his eyes. That gave birth to a huge opportunity as it seemed that the snow lizard was confused about the red light, for the beast was often looking around its surroundings.

The shine of the red light that Tatsumi saw was almost encompassing the entire area. Almost as if red paint was drawn on top of the snow.

“Master!! Landlady has drawn the landmark! The snow... Please transfer the snow at once!!”

For a second time, he could hear Calcedonia’s voice.

Because of that, Tatsumi completely understood.

—That’s right! The light was Eru’s illusion magic.

When he looked at Eru, her eyes were closed in worry and anxiety. Probably, to maintain the red light on this scale, she needed to concentrate her mind completely.

After tossing aside his sword, Tatsumi slammed his palms on the piled up snow at his feet.

“Oooooooooooooooooohhhhhhh!!”

From Tatsumi’s mouth, came a glass-shattering scream of fighting spirit.

The final remnants of his physical strength was used, and the snow within the drawn “landmark” was transferred in almost an instant.

A little ways off from Tatsumi's party, a large amount of snow fell, and a number of trees were knocked down.

And the snow from the area that Tatsumi, his party, and the giant snow lizard have been around up until now, mostly disappeared. In some parts of the ground, a blackened earth was exposed.

With no snow on the ground, the surface became muddy, nevertheless, compared to the time when it was accumulated with snow, movement became much less restricted.

".....Miloulle!! I'll entrust... the rest... to you...!!"

Tatsumi collapsed onto the muddy ground. And, as it was, he lied face-up, and, right after, he appeared to breathe heavily in pain.

In haste, Calcedonia rushed towards Tatsumi. Jadokh too; he ran with Calcedonia to Tatsumi.

The Eru who used a wide-range illusion magic leaned her shoulder against a nearby tree. Next to her, a small figure was touching her cheek in worry.

"...Humph, jeez!!"

While looking at her comrades, Miloulle, who was entrusted with the back by Tatsumi, cast aside the spear in her hand and slowly approached the giant snow lizard.

"...If it's like this, it's not just Jadokh that wants to live up to his confidence!"

Her eyes gleamed with determination and conviction, and she shouted,

"I'll do it! I'll get revenge for my comrades!"

From Miloulle's body, a blue light of magic poured out.

The light of magic surrounded Miloulle's body, and the radiance continued to grow.

The blue light conspicuously shined, and it wasn't Miloulle's figure, it was instead an unusual-looking shadow

She had a body type on the short and stout side with a large head, and she was covered in slippery scales.

Long and narrow limbs stretched out from that plump body, and there was webbing in between her fingers.

Large, prominent eyes. Mouth and gills that flap open and shut. A giant fin that adorned the back.

From her wrists to her elbows, there were two other huge fins, whose pointed ends were as sharp as a blade and shined dangerously.

“.....Uh, umm... Ha-Half-fishwoman ...?”

Calcedonia was helping Tatsumi when she saw that figure and such a fact was revealed.

<Fishwoman Transformation>

Like that, it was Milouille’s magic that only she could use.

Chapter 53: That System,〈Fish〉

The surroundings flooded with a blue magical light.

Within the light, Miloulle's shadow warped into a grotesque that.

Before long, when the magical light split open and disappeared, there was a single fishwoman.

".....Uh, umm... H-Half-fishwoman...?"

Tatsumi, who was being supported by Calcedonia, saw the figure, and he let out those words.

"T-That's《Beast Transformation》type magic... So this is the《Fishwoman Transformation》that was just said...?"

Once again, Calcedonia tilted her head from being unable to understand.

"...This system is probably a kind of lower derivation of the〈Water〉system, and it would appear to be the〈Fish〉system, but..."

"I've heard of higher derivations, but things like lower derivations also existed... Besides,〈Fish〉..."

Tatsumi, whose upper body woke up, was troubled whether that could really be called a system.

If one looked closely, the wreckage of the clothing that Miloulle was wearing was scattering about near where the fishwoman transformed Miloulle was.

At the time when the transformation to a fishwoman occurred, her clothes and whatever else she was wearing on her body burst off because the size didn't grow to fit the transformed body.

Perhaps it wouldn't tear if the size didn't grow to fit, and it possibly broke because of the mana that got released when she transformed into a fishwoman.

For this reason, Miloulle tossed her stuff away beforehand, and her old comrade's possessions were given to Calcedonia for safekeeping.

When Tatsumi was thinking such a thing, he turned to look at the fishwoman with no facial expression.

The fishwoman's misshapen and slightly large head went up and down. She was thanking tatsumi, who prepared for the situation.

When the fishwoman turned to the giant snow lizard for the second time, the fishwoman—no, Miloulle—ran out towards the giant snow lizard like a flying arrow.

Only one chance.

That's the words that Tatsumi and Calcedonia told her, and Miloulle thought it was going like that.

Here, she failed to bring down the giant snow lizard, and, when the beast let her escape, it would be hard to capture this magic beast the second time.

—So, this was a victory decided in one breath.

Miloulle, who looked determined, kicked the ground fiercely and rushed over to the giant snow lizard.

This was completely like a fish in water. She was using inhuman speeds, which Tatsumi using《Acceleration》couldn't approach and surpassed the speed of the giant snow lizard.

In the time it takes to say, "ah," Miloulle killed the distance between her and the opponent. Taking the chance, she jumped in and swung her strong, sharp fins that sprouted from both of her wrists to her elbows. This fin, for sure, was the weapon of the fishwoman-transformed Miloulle.

Even though Tatsumi was slashing at the beast for a long time, he could only inflict scratches on the giant snow lizard's scales. To those tenacious scales, Miloulle easily ripped them apart.

Dark blood was coming out of the giant snow lizard's body, dying the remaining snow, in the area, with spots.

In a voice of agony, the giant snow lizard screamed, "Gii!"

And then, Miloulle was making big jumps to behind the beast at the same time. The hind legs of the grown giant snow lizard had to retreat its big body

back by around ten meters in a single jump.

However, even with that, the distance between the two remained constant.

As the giant snow lizard fell back, Miloulle chased at even faster speeds.

For the second time, a “Gii!” escaped its mouth.

Was that yell for the chagrin of not being able to open the distance between the two, or the resentment of the opponent that was trying to injure itself?

The Miloulle that closed in upon the giant snow lizard swung her fins for the second time.

Her right fin cut very deeply into the giant snow lizard’s chest, and her left fin injured the magic beast’s right hind leg.

“...A-Amazing...”

Up until now, the fishwoman’s speed and power were overwhelming.

It certainly didn’t compare to Tatsumi’s《Instant Transition》and《Acceleration》, but the fishwoman-transformed Miloulle’s speed was overwhelming.

And then, about that strength, it even surpassed Jadokh’s, who boasted of his strength, by a margin.

“S-So amazing, yet... why did Miloulle not want to talk about it?”

“Well, of course.”

The one that responded to Tatsumi’s question was Jadokh, who still had his back to them.

“Do you think that other people would want to see a girl in that appearance?”

“Uh, uhhh, I guess not...”

Saying that, Tatsumi agreed again.

A short and stout body, thin limbs, an expressionless fish-face, and scales that covered her entire body.

That figure was certainly far off from being called “cool” or “beautiful.” If one was to choose words to say to this, “queer” and “strange” are things that could

be said.

A girl wouldn't voluntarily expose such a figure to other people.

Furthermore, whenever this magic is used, she'll become nude. As for that, there's no mistake that's the number one reason she won't say it.

But, the fishwoman-transformed Miloulle is truly amazing.

Though the bad footing of the fallen snow was relieved, she had the agility to easily follow the giant snow lizard and the overwhelming power to rip apart the tenacious scales.

A dreadful soldier, who entirely has both speed and power. That is the current Miloulle.

"Now, Tatsumi-chan. You can't also lose to Miloulle-chan, can you?"

Saying that, Jadokh presented the sword that Tatsumi dropped some time ago.

"Isn't there one last task remaining?"

"...Yeah. Isn't there."

Tatsumi nodded to Jadokh. And then, he left his sweetheart, who was supporting him.

"Calsey. Just this much is okay. My strength recovered. In the end... my strength is the only thing that can annihilate the〈Devil〉."

"Acknowledged, Husband."

In response to Tatsumi's request, Calcedonia started chanting an aria.

And then, when the aria was finished, Tatsumi's strength was only a little, but it recovered.

The giant snow lizard's anguished yell echoed in the surroundings.

The magic beast that had its right hind leg injured, drastically losing its mobility, was already not an opponent for Miloulle.

A whip-like strong tail was swung at her, but Miloulle easily cut that tail.

While waterfalls of blood spilled out from the cross-section of the tail, the

giant snow lizard bared its sharp fangs and bit at the fishwoman's body.

But, the pointed mouth that looked like a beak with fangs growing from it got ripped apart by the fishwoman's back fin.

Against the giant snow lizard's biting, Milouille attacked it wholeheartedly with her back fin. In the end, the magic beast's fang lost to the fishwoman's back fin, and that beak-like mouth was torn.

Chest, right hind leg, tail, and then mouth. The giant snow lizard, who was being forced into bleeding a lot from various places on its body, shook violently.

At that time, the eyes on the fishwoman's expressionless face shined momentarily.

When Milouille lowered her posture and crawled under the giant snow lizard's huge body, she swung her two hands in a way that it looked as if they were crossed.

Along with a slicing sound, the giant snow lizard's right hind leg was cut and flew off.

Even if it was the giant snow lizard, it couldn't stand with a leg gone.

A dou sound came from the ground where the giant snow lizard collapsed. The magic beast raised only its head, and when it saw how the surroundings looked, red reflected to its eyes from the scenery.

A fishwoman's body that danced in midair. When the fishwoman curled up her body in the air, she started spinning forwards with a lot of force.

The erect back fin became completely like a chainsaw and aimed and fell down on the collapsed giant snow lizard's body.

A "dosun" sound couldn't be heard from the fall. Instead, a "gyariririn" strange sound that sounded like something was cut resounded throughout the area.

And then, a little later, a "sari" sound came from Milouille descending lightly. And that sound's true form was the small sound of the cut-off head of the giant snow lizard dropping on top of the snow.

"Tatsumi!!! I'll entrust the finishing touches to you!!!"

Miloulle, who had her mana used up and her human body coming back, shouted. Naturally, she was currently nude, but there wasn't spare time to cover up and feel embarrassed.

Responding to Miloulle's voice, Tatsumi's figure that was being propped up by Calcedonia disappeared.

It was clearly seen in his eyes—the eyes of the perceiver Tatsumi. A grotesque devil separating from the cut-off head of the giant snow lizard.

That appearance didn't resemble the hungry demon from before; it was a demon's figure of less than 30 centimeters for its whole body.

It didn't have a horn on its large head, and its body and limbs were extremely small compared to its head.

Because that small demon saw Tatsumi suddenly appearing right before it's eyes, it revealed a facial expression that looked like it was spasming. Most likely, compared to the〈Devil〉that fought Tatsumi before, the〈Devil〉of now's level was low.

Taking advantage of the fact that it can't be seen to humans, the〈Devil〉wanted to escape. But, the human who suddenly appeared right before it's eyes was definitely staring fixedly at itself. There was no mistake that he was staring at itself. The tiny demon, in a hurry, noisily moved its small limbs. However, that movement speed was not fast enough.

“——!!!”

Tatsumi, in silence, swung his sword that shined with a golden light. That golden sword easily tore apart the tiny demon's small body without feeling any resistance.

Leaving behind a scream that only Tatsumi could hear, the tiny demon disappeared, looking as if it was dissolving into the air.

Tatsumi, who confirmed it earlier, put his sword back into the scabbard and looked back at his comrades.

They had an uneasy expression on their faces and were staring at Tatsumi fixedly.

At the same time that he was making a huge grin to his uneasy comrades, he gave a thumbs up with his right hand.

And then, seeing that, they sighed in relief. The〈Devil〉got killed by Tatsumi.

Just after confirming confirming that his comrades' facial expression brightened, Tatsumi's body shook violently.

His mana and his physical strength were used until its utmost limits, and he already didn't have the surplus to stand.

Tatsumi collapsed towards the ground. But, he never exchanged a deep embrace with the ground.

A certain person quickly rushed over to him and supported up his body.

That person was, of course, the girl that he loves——not.

Simply, that person, who was in a place closer to Tatsumi than Calcedonia, saw, hurriedly rushed up to, and supported the collapsing Tatsumi.

“——Thank you, Tatsumi. Thanks to you, I was able to take revenge for my comrades. Besides... I think you're a little cool.”

Directly to Tatsumi's ears, that person—Miloulle softly whispered so that only Tatsumi could hear.

To Tatsumi, who mastered〈Sky〉Magic that's said to be a legend and fought against the giant snow lizard, Miloulle unintentionally felt an attraction.

However, whether or not those words reached Tatsumi was uncertain. Because, he lost his consciousness at that time since all his body strength dissipated.

“——!!!”

From behind the two of them, a wordless scream sounded.

When Miloulle looked behind while supporting the Tatsumi who lost all feeling, Calcedonia was smiling hugely.

But, when she saw that smile, she felt like something cold was dripping down her back. Somehow.

Smiling, Calcedonia, without changing her expression, walked briskly up to

Tatsumi and Miloulle, who was still supporting the unconscious Tatsumi.

And, when she went to Tatsumi and Miloulle's side, she gently took Tatsumi from Miloulle.

"...A woman of marriageable age hugging a man in such an appearance? Ufufu."

Calcedonia informed while smiling. But, Miloulle felt an indescribable force drifting around Calcedonia.

"S-Such an appearance? ...Ha! N-Now that you say it...!!!"

While cold sweat came out because of the mysterious pressure, Miloulle repeated Calcedonia's words and remembered her current appearance.

Under the effect of her magic, she was currently completely nude. With such an appearance, she was sharing a hug with a man of around the same age—it was truly just to support him, but—

Remembering her current state, Miloulle's face turned a bright red.

"T-That's it...!!! I'm nude right now...!!!"

When she hurriedly looked around, Eru was making a troubled expression while leaning against a tree, and Jadokh was shrugging as if he was amazed.

Keeping her flushed face, forgetting to cover her body, she hastily looked around.

"C-C-C-C-Clothes!!! M-My cloooooooooothes!!!"

Miloulle noisily ran out on the snow. Her destination was the place back where she entrusted Calcedonia with her baggage.

"——Even if it's hugging Husband, even if it's getting hugged by Husband, it can only be me...!!!"

So, with puffed cheeks, Calcedonia whispered that in a voice that reached nobody's ears.

Chapter 54: Party

Tatsumi and company had somehow managed to defeat the giant snow lizard, which was possessed by a Devil.

As proof of defeating the giant snow lizard, the group collected the head and headed back to the royal capital after taking a short rest to recover their stamina.

Though it was not quite a triumphant return with Jadokh carrying Tatsumi who was still unconscious from exhaustion.

The party, which arrived at the capital safely and without much problems happening, went straight towards Tatsumi and Calcedonia's house. Then, after Tatsumi was laid down on the bedroom's bed, Calcedonia decided to go to Savaiv Temple to report.

Incidentally, Eru separated with the party on the way back, and returned to The Elf's Resthouse.]

"Thank you for everything you have done until now, Jadokh-san."

"Oh my, you're welcome. But—"

While giving a meaningful smile, he gazed on the bed that Tatsumi was laid down in.

"—Ain't this a really big bed? Maybe, with Tatsumi-chan...at night, is it intense?"

To Jadokh, who asked while winking, Calcedonia's face was dyed red in a moment.

For some reason, Miloulle, who was behind Jadokh, also turned red, and she countlessly flickered her eyes between Calcedonia, the bed, and Tatsumi.

"Hyo-Hyoe!!? I-I have a little bit of a bad sleeping posture, so I received this from grandpa, and certainly Husband and I sleep together, but there's no way it means that the nights are intense, though I'll also welcome it if it's very intense, but Husband worries and is very gentle to me...wait, what am I sayyyyiingg!?"

“My, my, if you scream so loudly, Tatsumi’ll wake up, ya know?”

“Quiet, okay?” continued Jadokh. Calcedonia hurriedly covered her mouth with her hands, and checked the sleeping Tatsumi’s state.

It appeared that his exhaustion was too much, so even with Calcedonia screaming in panic, he showed no signs of getting up.

Calcedonia realized that Tatsumi didn’t wake up, so she put her hand on her chest and sighed in relief.

Seeing her in such a state, Jadokh gave a gentle smile.

“I’ll tell the truth, okay? At first, I thought that Calsey-chan was a《Holy Maiden》, so you’d surely be a stiff woman with a serious face, but... the real Calsey-chan is really cute. One can tell that you love Tatsumi-chan. Oh, saying “cute” isn’t just for appearance, you know?”

Jadokh winked again, and when he did, he turned back towards Miloulle.

“Now, why don’t we take our leave? It would be bad if we intruded on Tatsumi-chan and Calsey-chan’s love nest forever.

“T-That’s right...”

“Oh? What is it that you’re so nervous about? Maybe, Miloulle-chan to this room...the stimulation of Tatsumi-chan and Miloulle-chan being intimate to each other every night in this bedroom is too strong, perhaps?”

When Jadokh, a little sadistically, asked, the Miloulle in question had her face redden again.

“I-It’s not that!!! L-Look, I’ll leave, I’ll quickly leave!!?”

After Miloulle replied to Jadokh in a way that sounded like she was barking, she stormed out of the house.

“Jadokh-san, you can’t tease Miloulle-san anymore, okay?”

“Ufufu. That girl was showing everything on her face, so I unintentionally teased her. But, isn’t around that much okay? If we be too silent, she might think about her dead comrades, so...”

“...Yes.”

Calcedonia felt admiration. At first glance, Jadokh, with his burly and large body, doesn't appear to stick his nose into other people's business.

However, the real Jadokh is a person that can give truly detailed attention to people. He angered Miloulle on purpose to make her not feel sad.

"Then, I'll also go. Make Tatsumi happy, okay?"

"Understood. Oh, as for this time's reward, I'll divide what I get from the temple with everyone."

"Got it. I'll tell the landlady and Miloulle-chan."

He winked for one last time, and Jadokh also left Tatsumi and Calcedonia's house.

With Jadokh and the rest gone, the house returned to silence.

After Calcedonia took off her equipment and put on normal clothes, she loosened Tatsumi's clothing.

The armor that he wore was taken off after the giant snow lizard was subjugated. For that reason, he was currently wearing the tough leather clothes under his armor, and it probably was quite hard to sleep comfortably.

When Calcedonia went on the bed and was loosening his clothing, Tatsumi slowly opened his eyelids.

"Husband? Have you awoken?"

"H-Huh? This place is... our house...?"

Still lying on the bed, Tatsumi slowly moved his head. It seemed like he understood where he was.

"Jadokh carried you back here for you. Next time you meet, you should thank him, okay?"

"I see... Jadokh was looking after me, wasn't he..."

While Tatsumi was muttering, Calcedonia continued moving her hands to make his clothes feel more comfortable.

"Thanks, Calsey."

"No... Perhaps, did I wake you?"

“Nah, it wasn’t like that. About me waking up, it was because I smelled something good nearby... yep, it was Calsey’s scent.”

Tatsumi stretched out his hand, and when he picked up a strand of Calcedonia’s hair, he put the tip of his nose to it and sniffed to make sure.

“...No mistake. It’s this scent. Yep, when I feel this scent, I somehow calm down.”

Tatsumi, while lying down, wholeheartedly smiled at Calcedonia.

“Hey, Calsey. Is it okay if I’m a little selfish?”

“Selfish...? Kya.”

Without waiting for Calcedonia’s reply, he pulled her arm and hugged her.

“Calcey... no, Chiiko, your scent is also good, certainly, but feeling your warmth and softness, like this, is... for me, the number one happiness.”

“.....Master.”

Tatsumi called Calcedonia “Chiiko.”

Calcedonia called Tatsumi “Master.”

When the two of them call each other by these names, it’s a sweet and beautiful time that’s precious only for the two of them.

“Thanks for today, Chiiko. Thanks to Chiiko, I was able to fight against the magic beast.”

“It’s nothing like that. I think you did a lot; it’d be impossible without Master... But, Master has become a lot stronger. Besides... When Master fought against the magic beast... Master looked really cool.”

While blushing and giving a happy smile, she buried her head with the back of his neck, and pecked there with her lips many times.

That was completely like a small bird play-biting its owner.

Tatsumi, in return, caressed Calcedonia’s face many times over to show love. And then.

It was uncertain as to which person started it, but the their lips touched each

other.

“Miloulle-chan... what will you do from now on?”

Along the way from Tatsumi’s house to〔The Elf’s Resthouse,〕Jadokh asked his neighbor-in-walking, Miloulle.

“...I think I’ll return to the village.”

Miloulle looked downward as she replied, which, to Jadokh, looked lonely.

“Those guys’... my comrades’ families, I’ll tell them that those guys died and give them their loved ones’ possessions... because that, I think, is my duty as the person that survived.”

“.....Isn’t that unreasonable?”

Jadokh used one of his big hands to pat Miloulle’s head.

“I’m fine. Because it’s not unreasonable.”

To Jadokh’s question, Miloulle gave a short reply.

While being petted by Jadokh, she gave a fleeting displeased expression, but, in the end, Jadokh didn’t stop.

Though, the warmth of Jadokh’s palm was actually comforting.

“But then? ...When I return those guys’ things to each’s family... I’ll come back to the capital again. And then... Could I join up with you all again?”

“Yeah, that’ll be fine. I’ll tell Tatsumi, okay? He’ll also gladly welcome you back, surely.”

When Jadokh made that promise, Miloulle made a happy-looking smile.

“Now! It’s decided, so I have to do my best! Cause I’m in debt to Calsey.”

The money for getting a complete set of magic beast-hunting equipment is never cheap.

There wasn’t a time limit to repay the money, but there definitely was a debt, which gave a bad feeling. From there, to rid herself of that weight, it’d be best to pay back the money as quickly as possible.

“You shouldn’t have to pay back immediately? Soon, the Early-Moon Months

will end and the ice spirits of the Daihyouzan Range will leave. When the snows melt, magic beast-hunting jobs will multiply. Especially during the snow's melting, many hungry magic beasts appear often, so it's when magic beast-hunting work is the most numerous."

While the snow piles up, there's a lot of magic beasts that stay in nests, holes, and other things throughout the winter, and, naturally, they wouldn't have eaten anything in that time. So, they'll be vigorous, active, and do whatever it takes to try to fill their stomachs when the snow melts.

At that time, magic beasts appear near human settlements, so even if it's said to be the busiest time for magic beast-hunting, it's the best.

However, there are a lot of magic beasts that become more fierce with the hunger, so it's also a time when the danger increases.

"I won't go back to the village if the snows haven't melted."

Stretching from the Royal Capital to Miloulle's home village, is a thin but reliable road. But, the road completely would be covered with snow in this season. So, even if she wanted to go back, she couldn't in this snow-covered season.

"Huh? What did you say? You're going to go magic beast-hunting by yourself until the snow melts?"

"Ah..."

For some time, Miloulle was thinking, "After I come back from my hometown, I want to be together with Jadokh, Eru, Tatsumi, and Calsey."

In short, if she didn't go back to her hometown, Jadokh and Tatsumi wouldn't let her become their comrades.

Realizing that what she said was a mistake, Miloulle laughed with a "ehehe," gave a forced smile, and shifted her gaze constantly.

"Th-That—... From now on, please accept me as your comrade...!!!"

In the middle of the street, Miloulle, who stopped, bowed very deeply to Jadokh while her face was turning red from embarrassment.